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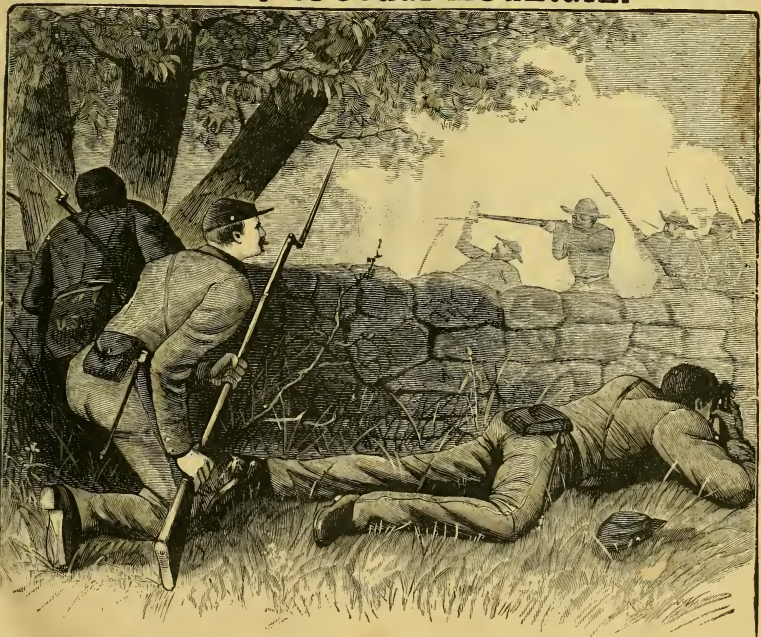
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THE FATAL CARBINE; or, A Harvest of Death.

BY MAJOR WALTER WILMOT.

A Story of Cedar Mountain.



The three Unionists, sheltered behind the stone wall, awaited the rebel charge.

THE FATAL CARBINE;

—OR—

THE HARVEST OF DEATH.

A Story of Cedar Mountain.

BY MAJOR WALTER WILMOT.

CHAPTER I.

A WILD RIDE AND A NARROW ESCAPE.

"Do it, general? You may stake your life I will. I'll try you to count on, every time," and, with a careless laugh, the speaker shook hands with the most conspicuous of a large group of general officers, and followed by a single aide-de-camp, turned away.

It was a lovely moonlight night in the month of June, 1862. At that time, McClellan had advanced with his magnificent army of one hundred and fifty-six thousand men, to the banks of the Chickahominy, and, pushing across, had fought on the last day of May the bloody but indecisive battle of Seven Pines.

On the right it was a Confederate, on the left a Federal success; and General McClellan drew back, marshaled his great lines, darkening both the northern and southern banks of the Chickahominy, and prepared for a more decisive battle at the Confederate capital, whose spires were even then in sight.

Before him, however, lay the rebel army, commanded now by General Robert E. Lee, who had succeeded Johnston, wounded in the battle of Seven Pines.

The moment was favorable for a heavy attack by Lee. Jackson had just driven before him the combined forces of Shields and Fremont, and on the bloody field of Port Republic ended the great campaign of the Valley at a single blow.

The veterans of his command could now be concentrated on the banks of the Chickahominy against McClellan; a combined advance of the forces under Lee and Jackson might save the rebel capital.

How should the attack be made?

A council of war was called. In this council General Stuart boldly proposed an attack upon McClellan's left wing from the direction of James River, to cut him off from that base.

This suggestion was not adopted; the defense was regarded as by far too strong. It was considered a better plan to attack the Federal army on the north bank of the Chickahominy, drive it from its works, and then the issue in the fields around Cold Harbor.

The great point was to ascertain if this was practicable, and especially to find what defenses, if any, the Federals had to guard their approach to their right wing.

If these were slight, the attack could be made with fair prospects of success. Jackson could sweep around while Lee assailed the lines near Mechanicsville; then one combined assault would probably defeat the Union forces.

In order to find the character of the enemy's works beyond the stream—his position, his troops, and movements—Stuart had just been directed to take a portion of his cavalry, advance as far as Old Church, if practicable, and then be guided by circumstances.

Such were the instructions he had just received, when Lee took his hand, and earnestly asked:

"Can you reach the church, Stuart, find out all I want to know, and, above all, return in safety?"

The great cavalry rider of the South promptly replied:

"Do it, general? You may stake your life I will. I'm yours to count on every time."

Then, with a careless laugh, he warmly shook the other's hand and turned away.

So the rebel cavalier mounted his horse on that bright moonlight night he was really a gallant figure to look at.

The gray coat buttoned to the chin; the light French saber balanced by the pistol in the black holster; the cavalry boots above the knee, and the brown hat with its heavy black plume floating above the bearded features, the brilliant eyes, and the huge mustache, which the cavalier with a laugh at the slightest provocation—these made Stuart the perfect picture of a gay cavalier, and the spirited horse he rode seemed worthy of such a rider.

Catching up with his column of about fif-

teen hundred horsemen, and two pieces of horse artillery, Stuart pushed on northward as if going to join Stonewall Jackson, and, reaching the vicinity of Taylorsville, near Hanover Junction, ordered his troops into bivouac for the night.

He himself had dismounted under a wide spreading tree, and while standing beside his favorite horse, was resting his elbows upon the saddle, gazing thoughtfully toward his busy men, and yet with a far-away expression.

Presently, he was approached by Colonel William H. F. Lee, one of his most trusted supporters, who laughingly asked:

"Hardly that," was the reply. "I was simply wondering what it was best to do with myself for the next three or four hours. I tell you what it is, Lee, war's all well enough, but it's a gloomy life; but, after all, a man wants a taste of something else once in a while; a glimpse of society, for instance, and the sight of a pretty woman's face."

"There's several places in this neighborhood where you might spend a very agreeable evening," suggested Lee.

"True; and I was just thinking; there's Hickory Hill, don't you know? You know," The colonel is badly wounded, and would, no doubt, be very glad to see us. What do you say? Have you a mind to take a gallop over there with me?"

"Shouldn't I be looking after?" exclaimed Lee, with alacrity. "That is, if you can put up with such a poor companion as myself."

"Come—come? don't depreciate yourself," said Stuart; "but mount, and let us be off."

"Shall we take an escort, general?" asked the colonel, when he was seated in the saddle.

"That's the use?" was the reply. "We shall meet none but friends. Forward!" and away they galloped down the road.

Hickory Hill, a noble Southern mansion, surrounded by ample, and, in times past, well-kept grounds, was reached in due time, and, after sending their horses to the stables, the two Confederate officers entered the house, where they were received and warmly welcomed by Colonel Wickham and his family.

To say that the visitors were most hospitably entertained, is only to state what always follows the reception of a welcomed guest in the Southern States. They were met with abundance, and thoroughly enjoyed on this occasion, that it was not long before General Stuart fell asleep in his chair, and the two colonels found it difficult work to keep up the conversation.

All at once there was a sound without—distant at first; but which every moment drew nearer and nearer, and which at length caught the attention of all, and brought Stuart and his friends to their feet.

"Cavalry!" he exclaimed. "Friends or foes—that's the question? and one we must not be long in deciding, either. Good-night, ladies; good night, colonel—as we may not get a chance to speak with you again. Now to reconnoiter."

They hurried to the rear of the house, which was rapidly being surrounded by Federal troops, as they did not wish to determine, and, by a shrewd maneuver, made their way out of the back door, past the kitchen—a separate building, as is usual in the South—and so reached the stable without being seen by the enemy.

In a moment they were in the saddle, and fairly out upon the road before their escape was discovered. Then what a wild shout went up!

"Where are they—after them!" cried the Union leader, captain Fletcher Burnham. "I tell you one of them is Stuart himself!" and the mad chase began in dead earnest.

But Stuart's party consisted of only twenty-five or more men—as brave and daring a body as ever sat in saddle, and they needed only to know that it was Stuart they were after to exert themselves to the very utmost.

How those horses did fly over the ground! The mere memory of it thrills me to this very hour.

Every now and then revolvers and carbines went ringing out:

Crack—crack—crack!

Still the two rebel officers kept steadily on their way, and Taylorsville was every moment within reach of the fugitives.

"I've again!" ordered Burnham. "It won't do to lose them now," and at least twenty carbines rang out; but still the fugitives kept on as though not a single shot had been fired.

"Give them another shot!" commanded the young captain, "and fire low this time. Try to hit their horses; that'll fetch 'em, I fancy."

Once more the sound of the weapons broke upon the air.

"One of them's down—ain't he, Charley?" exclaimed Burnham, suddenly, appealing to his friend and lieutenant, Charley Fairchild, who was riding by his side.

"I'm quite certain," responded Charley. "They're in the shade of that clump of trees yonder, and I can't make them out."

"No more can I," said the captain, in an irritated tone; "and, by Jove! if they've managed to escape us, after all, I shall be mad enough to kick myself. I shall—apud with right good will, too."

At that time the moon had reached the shadow of the woods, and they were not long in satisfying themselves that the two fugitives really had, in the most mysterious and unaccountable manner in the world, given them the slip.

It was some time before Fletcher Burnham was willing to acknowledge himself fairly beat; but, at last, he was forced to do so, and then, turning to his friend, he said, in a tone of resignation:

"Never mind, Charley. I know what the fox's rinder's up to this time, and you just bet I'll be on hand every day in the week; and, if you don't succeed in eliminating his forces before he gets through, why, I'm mighty mistaken; that's all."

CHAPTER II.

GRIT CARROLL, THE UNION SCOUT.

The chase over, the Union cavalry slowly returned to camp, and the young leader—for Burnham had not yet seen the twenty-sixth and seventy of his birthday—sprung to the ground, threw his bride to an orderly, and started off at a rapid pace toward his quarters.

A trooper was standing before the entrance. He was a noble specimen of the Northern soldier—a perfect giant in build and strength.

"Ah! Dan; it's you, eh?" said the captain. "Say anything of Grit—Grit Carroll, the scout?"

"Yes, captain," responded Dan Godfrey, with the usual military salute. "He was about here not more than fifteen minutes ago, but he didn't succeed in locating him. He learned that you had not yet returned. Guess he's in camp now."

"Hunt him up then, will you, and bring him to my quarters."

Dan again saluted, and hastened away.

Captain Burnham entered his tent; and, having seated himself, at once fell into an attitude of deep meditation, from which he was at last aroused by Dan, who suddenly presented himself, with the concise words:

"He's here, cap'n."

"Ah! let him come in."

The next moment Grit Carroll, the Union scout of the Potomac, stood before him.

One glance at this most remarkable man was enough to satisfy any one that he was a brave and noble patriot—a glorious hero, who, if he was battling against his own state and country, he would be as true and as brave as if he were fighting for the Union. He was a man of duty—from a true and undying love for the Union our fathers established—that Union which alone makes our country respected and feared throughout the world.

While he was speaking, Captain Burnham regarded him thoughtfully for a time. At length he ventured to say:

"You sent for me, captain."

"Yes," responded the other; "and you, it seems, have been here seeking me."

"Yes; I was anxious to know if you had met with success in your venture to-night, and also to give you further and still more important information."

"Ah! what is it? I know full well, Grit, that whatever comes from you is reliable; and, therefore, I am greatly interested," said Burnham.

"I found everything to-night exactly as you said I would, even to the number of men Stuart started with."

"You didn't take him at the colonel's?"

"No. No! Confound it, the men I sent to watch the stables didn't get there in time. We saw them the moment they struck the road, however; and then the tallest kind of a race began, while, at the same time, the men kept up a running fire upon them. How I would have liked to have seen them with their lives more than I am able to understand."

"Did you drive them clean into their camp, cap'n?"

"No. They disappeared in a little clump

of trees, just this side of Taylorsville—disappeared, I tell you, exactly as though the ground had opened and swallowed them up."

"I understand," nodded Grit, "those fellows are better acquainted in those parts than you men, cap'n."

"But we examined every inch of ground," asserted the captain.

"You went up and down the deep gulch that runs through the woods in a southeasterly direction?" asked the captain.

"No," was the reply; "but we examined it closely."

"Did you look carefully in that part just under the great oak?"

"I can't exactly swear to that."

"Ah, captain, believe me, there's just where the men hid out. There is a cavernous-like place there, washed out by the floods, and pretty much concealed now by vegetation, that would hold at least a dozen mounted men, and ninety-nine out of every hundred would pass it without even dreaming that it could conceal a single person."

"Fool! fool!—why didn't I do my work more thoroughly?" exclaimed Burnham, regretfully.

"I wish you had, cap'n, from the bottom of my heart," said Grit; "but after all, there's little blame in the matter. They knew of the existence of this hiding-place at least Stuart did—and you certainly did not."

"That's true, at least."

"Yes; and so they escaped, and now, the next thing is to catch the cunning fox at some other time and in some other place."

"Well, let it rest for the present," said the captain; "I don't understand you to say that you had other news for me?"

"Yes."

"Does it concern this grand raid?"

"In a measure, yes."

"Yes," he heard it.

"If General Stuart makes the report Lee thinks he will, and which, mark you, I know he will. It has been decided by the enemy, the Chickamauga, to make the right, and attack the force now on the east bank of the stream. Stonewall Jackson, who has brought quite a large army to the Shenandoah valley, is to co-operate with me; but no matter, but to tell it, a considerable force will be ostentatiously sent out from Richmond toward the Shenandoah, in order to give the impression that a movement of that quarter upon Washington is in contemplation. But after all, cap'n, I don't know but this information ought to go right straight to McClellan."

"The movement is to be carried out, until Stuart has returned, you say?" asked Burnham, quickly.

"No—it depends somewhat, and perhaps altogether, upon the condition in which he returns to the defenses."

"To be sure; then suppose you let the matter rest with me until some time to-morrow."

"Very well; as I actually belong to your command, captain, I consider myself in the first instance, subject to your orders."

"Good! and now for what I wanted to say. You know how mortally anxious I am for the honor of capturing the rebel raider, Stuart. Well, I want you to make sure of his next move, and let me make sure just what it is going to be, and when a good opportunity is likely to offer for me to swoop down upon him and gobble him up."

"All right, cap'n; I'm pretty certain he's making for Old Church now, as I told you he was doing, and I never expect to catch him, but keep you posted."

"Thank you, Grit—good-night. But, by the way, I want to say to you before you go that I and more are more satisfied with the manner in which you do your duty; and that, as I told you once before, if you have any inclination to wear chevrons on your shirt, I will see to it that you have the right to do so."

"I am greatly obliged to you, cap'n," returned Grit, with a snake of the head; "but, the fact is, I have no such inclination at present, and, what more, I never expect to have. But, in case I ever should aspire to be anything more than a mere private and scout, I won't fail to let you know."

"No, I will perhaps you are right," said Burnham, hastily; "and now, once more, good-night."

"Good-night," returned the scout, as he quietly withdrew; "I shall have news for you, I think, before daylight."

He did.

The information he brought was of such

an important nature that it sent Captain Fletcher Burnham, now acting as major, to Hanover Court House with a battalion of some five or six hundred men, at a very early hour.

"Have you ever visited this picturesque spot, reader?"

Well, you should have looked upon it on that bright day in June—upon its old brick country house where Patrick Henry made his famous speech against the parsons—its ancient tavern—its modest roofs—the whole surrounded by the fertile fields waving with golden grain. All this you should have seen, and then you should have taken note of Burnham's cavalry, like a vast flock of bluebirds—as the rebels were in the habit of calling them—lost, as it were, in the distance, and then you should have seen wheat and waving foliage.

Their horses stood ready saddled in the street, and this dark mass was suddenly gazed upon forlornly by General Stuart and his officers from behind a wooded knoll, in the rear of which his whole column was drawn up ready to move at the word of command.

When he gave the signal, the general dispatched Colonel Fitz Lee around to the right to flank and cut off the Union party.

All at once the scouts in front were decimated by the Federal cavalry; shots were heard, and, seeing that his presence was discovered, Stuart gave the word, and swept at a thundering gallop down the hill.

The startled bluebirds did not wait; they were too much taken by surprise. The whole squadron hastily got to horse—then, presto! they disappeared in a dense cloud of dust, from whence they made parting salutes from their carbines.

Stuart pressed on rapidly, taking the direct road to Old Church; and all went well until he arrived near a place called Hawes' Shop, in a thickly wooded spot, when suddenly and unexpectedly he was fiercely charged by Burnham's full command.

For a time the fight was hot—even desperate, but Burnham very soon understood what he ought to have thought of before he started out that morning—that his little troop had no chance against three times their number; then, slowly and sullenly, he began to retreat.

Yet, a the very last, anxious to accomplish his end, he suddenly wheeled and aloue dashed on toward the enemy at full gallop, and, at the head of his column, fired twice at Stuart, then once more he wheeled short about and went back at full speed to his command.

For a brief period the rebel general was dumfounded by such audacity. Then, quick and sharp came the orders in a clear, ringing voice:

"Close up! Form fours! Draw sabers! Charge! And now the Confederates shouted at headlong speed, uttering shouts and yells sufficiently loud to awaken the dead of centuries!

The men were evidently exhilarated by the chase, the Federals just keeping near enough to make an occasional shot practicable.

Once again they made a stand, and then, at a sharp signal, a considerable number were either wounded or captured, and most of these proved to belong to the company in which Colonel Fitz Lee had formerly been a lieutenant.

It was quite laughable to see the evident pleasure which "Colonel Fitz," as he was generally called, took in inquiring after his old cronies. "Was old Brown alive? Where was Jones now?" and was Robert so content still?" Colonel Fitz never stopped until he found out everything; or, rather he wouldn't have stopped if there hadn't have come an interrupt.

The prisoners were still laughing as they recognized him, or were answering his innumerable questions, when all at once a cavalryman rode up, and saluting Stuart, said:

"We have just captured a deserter, sir."

"A deserter?"

"Yes, general."

"Who was he?" was Stuart's next brief interrogatory.

"Coming under, general," answered the cavalryman.

"What was he, this looks bad," said Stuart, turning to his officers with lowering brow.

"He was,"

"How do you know this man is a deserter?" he asked.

"One of my company knew him when he joined our army," responded the cavalryman promptly.

"Where is he from?"

"Caroline county."

The man then mentioned the town, which was a romantic place on the banks of the Rappahannock.

"What is his name?"

"Carroll—Elmer Carroll."

"Hum—bring him up," said Stuart, coldly, with a lowering glance from the blue eyes under the brown hat and black face.

As he spoke, two or three mounted men rode up to the front of the general.

He was a young man, apparently eighteen or nineteen years of age, and wore the blue uniform, tipped with yellow, of a private in the Confederate army.

The singular face which he appeared completely at his case. He seemed to be wholly unconscious of the critical position which he occupied; and as he approached he returned the dark glance of Stuart, with the air of one who says: "What do you find in my appearance to make you fix your eyes upon me so intently?"

In another moment he was in Stuart's immediate presence, and calmly, quietly, without the faintest exhibition of embarrassment, or any emotion whatever, waited to be addressed.

The rebel general's words were curtest of the curt.

"Is this the man?" he demanded.

"Yes, general," replied one of the escort.

"You said he was a deserter?"

"Yes, sir; I knew him in Caroline county, when he joined Captain Watson's company; and there is no sort of doubt about it, general, as he frankly acknowledges that he is the same person."

"Acknowledges it?"

"Yes, sir; acknowledges that he is Elmer Carroll, of Caroline county, and that after joining the Southern army."

Stuart flashed a quick glance at the prisoner, and seemed at a loss to understand what fatuity had induced him to testify against himself, thereby sealing his fate.

His gaze, which had been fixed upon the returned by the youth with apathetic calmness. Not a muscle of his countenance moved, and those who stood by now had an opportunity to look at him more attentively.

He was even younger than they had at first thought him—indeed, a mere boy. His complexion was fair, his hair flaxen and curling, his eyes blue, mild, and as soft in their expression as the gleaming glances of the rebel leader, as a girl's—ay, and almost as confiding.

More than one brave man there found it impossible to suppress a sigh, so painful was the thought that this really noble-looking youth would probably soon be lying low with a bullet through his heart.

It has been said by those who knew him well that a kinder hearted man than General J. E. B. Stuart never lived. However this may be, one thing is certain, in all that appertained to his profession and duty as a soldier, he was simply inexorable.

Description, in his estimation, was one of the deadliest crimes of which a human being could be guilty, and his course was plain, his resolution immovable.

"What is your name?" asked the general, coldly, with a dark and lowering brow.

"Elmer Carroll, sir," was the response, in a mild and pleasing voice, in which it was utterly impossible to discern the least trace of emotion.

"Where are you from?"

"I belong to Burnham's command—the cavalry that engaged you just now, sir."

The voice had not changed in the least, a calmer tone was never heard.

"Where were you born?" continued Stuart, as coldly as before.

"In Caroline county, general, sir."

"Did you belong to the Southern army at any time?"

"Yes, sir."

The utter coolness of the speaker was incredible. Stuart could only look at him for a moment in silence, so astonishing was this equality at a time when his life and death were in the balance.

Not a tone of the voice, a movement of the muscles, a tremor of the lips indicated consciousness of his danger. The eye never quailed, the color in his cheek never for an instant faded.

The prisoner acknowledged that he was a deserter from the Southern army, with the simplicity and candor and calmness of one who saw in that fact nothing extraordinary, or

CHAPTER III.

A FEARFUL TRAGEDY.

Again General Stuart spoke.

"How do you know this man is a deserter?" he asked.

calculated in any manner to affect his destiny unpleasantly.

Stuart's eyes flashed; he could not understand such apathy, but as he was there a little time to investigate psychological phenomena.

"So you were in our ranks, and you went over to the enemy?" he said, with a sort of growl.

"Yes, sir," was the calm reply.

"You were a private in that squadron of cavalry that attacked us just now?"

"Yes, sir."

Stuart turned to an officer, and pointing to a tall pine near, said in brief tones:

"Hang him to that tree!"

Then it was that a change—sudden, awful, horrible—came over the face of the prisoner.

At that moment those about him read in his distended eyeballs the "vision of sudden death."

The youth became ghastly pale, and the eyes, before so vacant and apathetic, were all at once inflamed with blood, and full of piteous light.

He might have been seen in an instant that the poor boy had not for one single moment realized the terrible danger of his position; and that the appalling words, "Hang him to that tree!" had burst upon him with a sudden and stunning force of a thunder-bolt.

Human countenances have been seen expressing every phase of agony; ay, many have seen the writhings of the mortally wounded, as they lie choked with blood, and the horror of the death-struggle fixed on the cold, upturned faces of the dead; but never had there been witnessed an expression more terrible and agonizing than that which passed over the face of the boy-deserter, as he thus heard his awful sentence.

He had evidently regarded himself as a mere prisoner of war; and now he was condemned to death.

He had looked forward, doubtless, to mere imprisonment at Richmond until regularly exchanged, when "Hang him to that tree!" burst upon his ears like some avenging Nemesis.

Terrible, piteous, sickening was the expression of the boy's face. He seemed to feel already the rope around his neck—he choked.

When he spoke, his voice sounded like a death-rattle.

An instant of horror-struck silence; a gasp or two as if the words were trying to force their way against some obstacle in his throat.

Then the sound came.

His tones were not loud, impassioned, energetic; not even animated. A sick terror seemed to have frozen him. When he spoke, it was in a sort of moan.

"I didn't know," he murmured, in low, husky tones, "I never meant, when I went with them, to do anything wrong—to fight against my own friends. They told me it was all right; so did another. They knew who I was—they had been told I was a Southerner—and, so help me God! I haven't fired a shot to-day. I was in the rear with a captured horse. Oh! general, spare me, I never—"

There the voice died out; and, as pale as a corpse, trembling in every limb—a spectacle of helpless terror—no words can describe the boy awaited his doom.

Stuart had listened in silence; his gaze riveted upon the speaker, his hand grasping his heavy head, his lips tightly compressed.

For an instant he seemed almost with sadness and death were poised in the balance. Then, with a cold look at the trembling deserter, he said to the men:

"Take him away, and carry out the order. By her own sin he's not fit to live."

With these words he turned and galloped off.

The deserter was at once led to the pine tree.

Now something remarkable happened.

The boy who had so earnestly pleaded for his life with fear and trembling at once became a man—a man ready to meet death with that flinching fear almost with sadness that those entrusted with the duty tied his hands behind him, and placed the fatal noose about his neck.

The column had been ordered to advance, and all the troops moved forward, none cared to look upon the last scene in the grim drama. The last, did we say? Ah, no! the last bloody scene in that fatal drama was not to be enacted for two years—lacking twenty-eight days!

"Come—come, my men!" exclaimed the officer impatiently, as he cast a hasty glance

toward the now rapidly receding cavalry. "I've no wish to hurry this young fellow into eternity; but we must make haste, or we shall never catch up with our command."

"We're all ready, lieutenant," said one of the men.

"Very well." Then to the prisoner: "Have you anything you would like to say before we swing you off?"

"Nothing but this," responded the unfortunate youth: "Your general has ordered you to commit deliberate murder; and that's just what you are doing—nothing more or less. It must be plain enough to you all that I am no more than a mere boy, with little or no knowledge of military law. Do you think I could have promptly answered all your questions, and those put to me by your general, had I known, or even for a moment dreamed, what would be the consequences? Yes, I tell you, this is a wicked, a cruel—even a useless murder. Still I do not blame you. But you may tell General Stuart, for me, that he surely will have cause to rue this day's work to the last hour of his life—ay, and that last hour will come the sooner for the pitiless course he has taken."

Then, after a moment of silence:

"I—I would like to send a message to my mother, my brother—ay—no—not let it pass. I have kept you too long as it is. I am ready!"

"But, my poor fellow," began the officer, in a compassionate tone, "any message you would like to send."

The youth only shook his head.

"Then good-by"—sorrowfully.

"Good-by"—almost cheerfully.

The order was obeyed, and in less than two minutes the poor boy's soul was in eternity.

"Mount!" ordered the officer, when he was quite satisfied that his work was complete. "Forward! Double quick!" And away they sped along the road their companions had passed over.

An hour passed, and not a living soul appeared to look upon the swinging body of the murdered boy.

Some minutes more elapsed, and then, suddenly, a single individual thrust aside the undergrowth, and made his way out of the thicket, toward the gallows.

For some moments he did not see the ghastly object almost close to him, for he was looking the other way; but presently turned, and then the swaying body caught his eye.

For one instant he gazed upon it, and then a look of the utmost horror came into his face.

"My God!" he gasped, "it's Elmer! My own little brother! Now what fiend's work is this?"

CHAPTER IV.

AN AVENGER.

It was Grit Carroll, the Union scout, who stood gazing up at the lifeless body swinging from the limb of the pine tree, and who uttered the words at the close of the preceding chapter.

His brother! Yes, it was too true, that ghastly-looking body at all that remained on earth of his dearly-loved, his almost identical brother, Elmer—little Elmer, he had always called him.

The poor boy's war history had been brief. When his elder brother—elder by more than a year—was about to leave the army, he came home on the banks of the Rappahannock, to join the Union army, he had made Elmer promise not to take any part in the great struggle but to remain quietly at home, and do all in his power to aid and assist their widowed mother.

Grit had no fear that the Confederate authorities would force the lad into their army, for he reasoned, if his youth does not save him, his mother's widowhood surely will.

He never told Elmer that he was going to join the Northern army, for being a dead-end, he had from the first map in his mind to do as a scout, and knowing therefore that he would be obliged to be much alone, and in his own country, he thought it best that none of his relatives or neighbors should know of his going.

Having obtained his brother's promise, he went away feeling that all would go on well at home.

Grit Carroll had not taken one thing into due consideration, the influence of Elmer's companions, boys of his own age.

Not long after Grit's departure a regiment

was raised in Caroline county, one company of which was made up in the vicinity of Elmer's home. Two-thirds of his friends joined it, and he soon received many pressing invitations to do likewise.

For a long time he resisted, turning a deaf ear to all pleadings. At last, however, in a fatal moment he said Yes, and became a soldier in the gray.

He went through a single campaign, and then with some others, was captured by a squadron of Union cavalry.

He was taken to a place called North as a prisoner of war, when the scout of the Potomac happened to enter the camp.

Elmer saw him, and uttered an exclamation of delight.

"Hello! you—and in that dress?" cried Grit, advancing toward his brother.

"Yes, dear old fellow," said Elmer, "they made me. That is, you see, all the other boys about our place went into the army, and they wouldn't give me any peace until I joined them."

"Hum," almost growled Grit, "and now you see what it has brought you to. You are just about as good as dead, and I will be cooped up in some Northern fortress for the next three years."

"Oh, say, Grit, old fellow, you can fix all that. Don't let them take me away. Just let me stay here with you."

"But you couldn't do that, you know, without joining our army," objected Grit.

"I don't care. The army that's good enough for you is surely good enough for me. I properly answered all your questions."

"But I am not with my command very often," said the elder.

"No matter. I should see you oftener than I would like to. Now get up, or you will be sent back to my old command."

"True, Elmer, and I'll see what our commanding officer has to say about the matter," and as he turned away, he muttered to himself: "I don't like to see the child more under my own eye, and I think I could see it that no harm comes to him."

The commanding officer said:

"By all means, let him join," and he quickly added, "I'd like to enlist the whole Southern army in the same way."

"But he's very young, you know," suggested Grit.

"No matter," replied the other; "he understands his business, and I'm glad enough to get new recruits that stamp on any terms."

Thus it was that Elmer Carroll had become a Union soldier. He had joined the Northern army out of love for his brother.

Now, here was the end of it all: murdered—foolishly murdered as a deserter!

A mere child—an innocent, unthinking youth—murdered! Grit! What dastardly cowards to perpetrate such a shameful act! Oh! that I only knew who were its authors.

"Water! comrade—bring me water!"

Grit turned.

The faint cry seemed to come from the undergrowth, not a dozen paces from him.

He listened.

"In Heaven's name! a drink, comrade. My throat's as dry as a limekiln."

Ah! he saw where the came from now, and hastened forward.

He parted the thick underbrush, and just within a few paces, stretched at his length, but with his head raised and rested on his hand, which was supported by his elbow.

He took off his cap, and making his way into the light, held it to his lips.

The wounded trooper drank eagerly.

"Ten thousand thanks, comrade," he said, when he had finished the last drop in the canteen.

"You're welcome, comrade. What dastardly cowards! Now if you will only raise me a little, and help me to get my back against that tree—"

"Of course," and then, as he assisted him, "you're Newton, of Burnham's cavalry, ain't you?"

"You bet; and you're Grit Carroll, the scout, and brother of the poor fellow swinging yonder."

"Did you see the cruel work done?"

"Saw it all," said Newton, "and I'll tell you all about it, if you like."

"Wait—let me look at your wound first," Newton said, "and then to good."

"I don't mind it," said Grit, "if they hadn't shot my horse, I should have managed to keep my seat, and so got away. But you see, the best fell at the same moment, and a ball struck me in the back of the head."

"But to crawl in here, unless I'm going to get inside of Castle Thunder, or submit myself to the embrace of Libby. I thought

of the alternative for just one moment, and concluded to crawl. "No one missed me—no one dreamed of my being here, and so I leave everything that transpired at my leisure—saw it from beginning to end, and when it was all over, saw the last man ride away."

"Newton, you must let me look at your wound, myself. It may not be dangerous now; but it may speedily become so by neglect; and, at any rate, the flow of blood should be stopped."

"I don't want to bother you, old fellow, that's what's the matter."

"Bother?" said Grit, earnestly; "you don't know how much consequence your life has to me—I want to have you under my hand, just that order, my brother-in-law, to be hung; that, of course, you will tell me at once—but I want more than that—I want you to point out to me every man who had your hand in the matter. First, the one who denounced him as a deserter; if you can, then those who took charge of him and executed the commanding officer's orders."

"Hum! Well, I think myself they ought to suffer for it, and—yes, I will do all I can to help you, Grit."

"Thank you, my dear fellow, I was sure you would, and now let me open your coat."

Grit examined the wound. He saw that it was not serious, but carefully washed and dressed it, and then, said:

"I want to leave you for a little while, and I can't let poor Elmer be wing from this cursed tree one moment longer than is necessary. After I have cut him down and his hands are in the ground, I will come back; meanwhile, take this, eat a little, and I will bring you more water presently."

The scout's first care was to cut down the body of his brother. Then, when he had laid him on bed of leaves and dried grass, he went to a neighboring stream; and, having filled his canteen with water, returned with it to Newton.

After this, he selected a secluded spot, where he was not likely to be observed by any one passing on the road; and, having scooped out a grave with a piece of board he had found, assisted somewhat by his saber, he laid the body in the place where he had left the body; and, raising it tenderly in his arms, carried it to its last resting place.

How gently he laid it in its last narrow home—how affectionately he covered the dear face and beloved form with green leaves and sweet-smelling flowers; then, with what a sigh he threw in the earth, and said the words that showed—but too plainly—what was buried below.

Awhile he lingered, as if in prayer, and then he returned to the wounded cavalryman.

CHAPTER V.

A SPIRITED ADVENTURE.

"Newton," said Grit, Careful, throwing himself upon the ground by the side of the wounded man, "now tell me, please, just who it was that gave the order which cost my brother his life."

"General Stuart," answered Newton, promptly.

"Stuart?" exclaimed Grit; "are you sure?"

"Dead certain," returned the other confidently. "I heard him called by that name at least a dozen times."

"Describe him, please."

"Now, as to that, I am very minute indeed, a very accurate description of the great cavalry leader of the South."

"That will do," said Grit, at last, setting his teeth tight together, and breathing hard. "You are right, but Stuart, and not me, Newton, his murdering order will cost him dear. Now who was it that denounced poor Elmer as a deserter?"

"Can't tell you, as his name was not mentioned once."

"What did he say?"

"Said he came from the same county, and that he was the same part of the county that Elmer did. Said he was a member of the same company that he joined. Knew him well—couldn't be mistaken, and a lot more besides."

"But! Can you describe just how he looks?"

"Yes; that's an easy matter enough. He is a heavy built man, not more than twenty-two, or twenty-three, or I should think, regular brutal face, with a hungry—almost endless look about it. He was—"

"That's enough," interrupted the scout. "I've got him dead to rights, and don't you

forget it. I suspected who it was from the first, but I wanted to make no mistake in the matter. The dirty scoundrel has always had Elmer from as long ago as I can remember—yes, and me too, for that matter. Ah! Loren Langford, look out! the avenger is on your track—the avenger who will rest neither night nor day until he sees you hanging where your poor innocent victim hung!"

"Right! old fellow!" exclaimed Newton, "and anything I can do to put him there, I will."

"Thanks, comrade, and as I have already said, I shall avail myself of your services whenever it is possible to do so. Now, if you'll permit me, I will describe all the others who had a hand in this cowardly murder."

Newton proceeded to do so.

Grit could recognize but two from his descriptions. The lieutenant and most of the men could not place.

At length he said:

"There is no use wasting any more time now. We shall visit their camp together soon, and you can point them all out to me. And now it is time we were leaving this place. Do you feel able to ride?"

"Lord, yes, old fellow. I'm all right, only a little weak. But where's there a horse for me?"

"Mine is concealed in the other part of these woods," said Grit. "I'll bring him up presently; but I'm sorry to say we shall be obliged to ride double."

"That's all right, only I hope we shan't meet any of the enemy on our way back."

"I hope not; but your arms—I trust you were able to save them?"

"Here's my saber, and my pistols I grabbed from the holsters the last thing before I made for this hiding place."

"But your carbine?"

"I don't like to forget all about that. Too bad—too bad! and Grit, old boy, I thought the world of that piece, it was my special pet, and now I suppose some one of the Johnnies has made love to it."

"I'll take a look. Which one of those dead horses rider was yours?"

"The roan."

"Good!" and Grit forced his way through the undergrowth to the road.

Newton soon heard an exclamation of satisfaction, and peering from his retreat, saw that his friend was in the act of drawing for a carbine from under his dead horse.

"The scout hastened to restore the successful weapon, and then started off to find his own steed."

He was not long absent, and when he returned, he assisted the wounded cavalryman to mount, then taking his own place in the saddle, and requesting Newton to hold fast, he started off in the direction of the Federal army.

All at once he pulled up short, and before Newton could ask a single question, began backing into a piece of woods.

Dismount, old fellow—dismount as quickly as possible," he whispered, "and conceal yourself in that clump of bushes."

"What's up?" asked his astonished comrade.

"You'll see in a moment," and Newton, having with some difficulty slipped to the ground, Grit pushed his horse forward a little way and waited.

Presently, a Confederate cavalryman came along.

"Halt!" exclaimed Grit, suddenly showing himself.

The Johnnie came to a dead stand.

"Come out of that of the woods," said Grit, sternly. "None of that!" he quickly added in a warning voice. "Undertake to touch your pistols, or hesitate for an instant to obey me and I fire!"

The unfortunate rebel surrendered at once.

"Now, then, Newton, take charge of him," called Grit, and as the Federal trooper came up to the prisoner's weapons from him, he continued:

"But just give me that gray overcoat he has on, and let me swap horses with him; for I think I can do a little business right here. The detachment of rebel cavalry encamped just above this spot I see."

Newton handed him the rebel coat, which the scout put on; after which he mounted the other horse, and taking a position on the road, awaited the appearance of some further prey.

He had not waited long, when a second scout came along, and seeing Grit dressed in a gray overcoat and Confederate accoutrements generally, had no fear of him.

His confiding simplicity was his ruin.

When he had come within a few yards Grit "put his pistol on him," in military parlance, and took him prisoner, calling Newton from the woods to take charge of him.

The captive had scarcely been conducted into the underwood and placed beside the other, when two men appeared, coming from the same direction, and the audacious Grit determined to capture them also.

He called to Newton once more; but that worthy was too busy rifling the unfortunate graycoats, and did not hear. He then resolved to capture the two new cavalrymen by himself.

He accordingly advanced toward them, when suddenly another came around the corner of the woods and joined them, making three.

He still designed attacking them, when another appeared, making four; and as they now approached Grit they suddenly drew their revolvers and leveling them, ordered him to surrender.

He was within five feet of them, holding his own revolver in his hand, and coolly:

"What do you mean?"

"We mean," said the men, "that you are a confounded Yankee spy, and you are our prisoner."

"I am no spy," was the reply.

"What regiment do you belong to?"

"The—'th Virginia."

"Who commands it?"

"Colonel Taylor."

"Right. Who commands the brigade?"

"General Frisbie."

"Right again. Where is it stationed?"

"Near Old Tavern; but a squadron is with Stuart."

"Yes. Who commands the division?"

"Look here," said Grit, who, of course, was thoroughly acquainted with his role, "I am tired of your asking me so many questions; but I will answer all the same. The—'th Virginia is in Frisbie's brigade, Norton's division, and Stuart commands the whole. I belong to the regiment, and am no spy."

"He's all right, boys," said one of the men; "let him go."

"No—no!" exclaimed another, "I saw him capture one of our men not ten minutes ago."

"You are mistaken," said Grit, coolly.

"You are a Yankee spy!" cried the man.

"And how do I know you are not spies and scouts from the Yankee army?" asked Grit; "you have on gray coats, to be sure, but let me see your pantaloons."

"They raised their coat-skirts and showed their pantaloons, which, whatever they were, were not of Federal blue."

"Now show yours," they said.

Grit had foreseen this, and fortunately being prepared, readily exhibited his own, which happened to be those of a Confederate officer.

"He's one of our officers, boys," said the former spokesman.

"Yes, I am," said Grit, "and I'll report you all for this conduct."

"None of your talk," said the incredulous cavalryman, fiercely. "I know you are a spy, and you've got to go with us, and that's the end of it."

"Very well," returned the Union scout; "the picket post is just down the road. I'll take you there and convince you."

"All right!" was the reply; and they ranged themselves two on each side, with drawn pistols, and all rode back.

Grit now plainly saw that it was neck or nothing.

If he was conducted to the picket, he knew that his real character would be discovered, his fate be a stout rope and a short shrift, and that his body would soon be dangling from a tree, as a warning to all spies.

Accordingly, he watched his chance, and, suddenly, crossing his revolver over his breast, shot the man on his left through the back; a second shot he fired at the man on his right; then, all four shot at him so close that their pistols nearly touched him!

Strange to say, not a ball struck him! He then turned to the horse and dashed back, until he was opposite the spot where Newton was concealed, when he wheeled round, and they all stopped suddenly.

Grit coolly crossed his leg over the pommel of his saddle, covered them with his revolver, and said:

"Now, come, you cowardly rascals! Charge me—if you dare! I'll answer for two of you the first pop."

They remained consulting hurriedly within fifteen paces of him for some minutes, and then turned round and rode back.

They had not gone fifty yards, however, when shame seemed to overcome them; and, swinging round, the three who were now wounded charged him, throng with their pistols as they came on.

Grit charged forward to meet them, emptying his chambers in quick succession.

One fell dead; the other two turned their horses and fled down the road, Grit pursuing them with shouts, and firing upon them until they had almost reached their camp.

Again turning, the brave scout's first care was to secure the dead man's horse.

He then once more returned to the point where he had left Newton and the prisoners.

"Come, old fellow," he said, "there's no time to swap knives now—up with one of the rebs on my horse, and put the other on this one; then, you can have the animal we captured first. Be quick about it, or we will have a whole squadron of Confederate cavalry down upon us."

They worked fast, and were all speedily mounted.

"Now, then," said Grit, addressing the prisoners, "I want no funny business, if either of you fellows attempt to escape, down goes your tabernacle quicker than you can say Jack Robinson. Understand!"

The prisoners intimated that they did.

"All right, then. Forward, and away they dashed toward the Union lines."

They had not gone far when they heard a terrific yell behind them, and, looking back, at once saw that they were being hotly pursued by at least fifty of the enemy.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ESCAPE.

"Now, then, Newton, we are in for it, sure," said Grit, casting another hurried glance at the advancing rebels, "and this horse of mine is carrying double, too."

"Yes," replied Newton, "and I'm sure."

"How do you feel?" asked the scout.

"Does your wound trouble you any?"

"Oh, bother the wound," growled the trooper. "Don't think of that, old fellow. Let's get out of this mess."

"I would like to," smiled Grit.

"How long can your horse keep up that gait?" asked Newton.

"Some time yet," was the reply, "and I fancy the rebels won't be in a hurry to fire upon us so long as they risk hitting two of their own men."

"What a blessing it is, then, that we've got them with us!"

"On thinking old Sultan, here, would be glad to dispense with the blessing."

The pursuing party was now drawing nearer and nearer every moment; but, as Grit had foreseen, did not fire.

Suddenly, wheeling his horse about, he sent two shots at the foremost of the enemy.

Down went the first man, and the next reeled in his saddle.

"So far, so good," he muttered, and again he sped on.

Newton had charge of the other prisoner. He waited until Grit had got some length ahead; then, turning, and bringing his carbine to his shoulder at the same time, fired.

Down went another man, and the onward dash of the Confederates was momentarily checked.

"Now, grayback," said Newton, to his charge, "we must show them our heels in dead earnest," and away they went, like the wind.

Again and again the pursuers came within pistol-shot, and each time they received a dose of lead from Grit's revolver and Newton's carbine.

At length, losing all patience, they returned the fire.

The prisoner behind Grit gave a yell of agony, and suddenly uncupped his hands.

He could not fall, for he was fastened securely to the back of the scout's horse.

Grit turned around and looked into his face.

"Where did the bullet strike you?" he asked.

The man did not answer, but stared at him as if he had not heard.

The scout repeated the question.

Then the other's lips moved, and a torrent of blood gushed from his mouth. The next instant his eyelids dropped, and his head fell forward.

"It's all up with him, poor fellow!" muttered Grit; and he unbuckled the strap that held him.

With a dull, heavy thud, the dead man fell to the ground, and the horse bounded forward as if relieved of a burden.

"Now, then," cried the scout, "for one last effort. Forward!" and away they rushed to meet the enemy.

The pursuers, seeing there was little chance either of overtaking or bringing them down, halted, and then, turning, rode sulkily away.

Having disposed of his prisoner and captured horses, and, what was of much more consequence to him, found a competent surgeon to look after Newton's wound, Grit began to think of himself.

He was faint and hungry, and, although he tried to confess it even to himself, dead tired.

The first thing, then, was to find food; the next, a little rest.

Grit, of course, was at no loss to procure the wherewithal for a substantial meal, and, having satisfied his appetite, he threw himself upon the ground, in the shade of a spreading tree, for a short nap.

He was careful not to oversleep, and, two hours later, he was once more in the saddle, riding at a furious rate in the direction of Old Church.

Stuart, having left the fatal spot where young Elmer Carroll yielded up his innocent life, pressed on with his column at a rapid rate in the direction of the Tottapatom, a sluggish stream, drugging the waters slow with rotten rush-clad banks beneath drooping trees; and reached it at a point where it is crossed by a small rustic bridge.

The whole line of the stream he found, to his great satisfaction, was entirely untroubled by works. McClellan's right wing was unprotected.

Stuart had accomplished the great object of his expedition, and felt satisfied that he could pick off Jackson over the same ground.

But, for the present, he determined to go on—as Grit Carroll, the scout, had said he would.

A Union picket was stationed at the bridge. His was quickly driven in, and retired at a gallop to the high ground beyond, where Stuart's advance guard, under Colonel W. H. F. Lee, first encountered the Union forces.

The Federals mustered something over a thousand men, and consisted of Burnham's cavalry and a squadron of regulars under Captain Royal, of the United States Army.

They were met in the battle in the fields to receive the rebel attack.

It came without delay.

Placing himself at the head of his command, Colonel Lee swept forward at the *pas de charge*, and, with shouts, the two lines came together.

The shock was heavy, and the Union troops stood their ground nobly, meeting the attack with the saber.

Clashes of sword, pistols and carbines banged, yells, shouts and cheers resounded; and then the Federal line was seen slowly to give way.

Burnham and Royal did their utmost to hold their men together, and keep them up to the work; but the enemy had the advantage in numbers, and the impetus of the attack, and so, at length, the Federals broke and fled in confusion.

For some time they were pursued with ardor, and the rebels were fairly wild over their victory; but, ah! soon all joy disappeared from their faces at sight of a spectacle which grieved them.

Captain Latane, of the Essex cavalry, and probably one of the best known and best beloved officers of the Southern army, had been mortally wounded in the charge, and, as the command was now in the hands of a bloody before them, many a bearded face was wet with tears.

The scene at a grave afterward became the subject of a great historical painting, by Mr. Washington Hunt. "The Burial of Latane," and I find it recorded that, in his general order after the expedition, Stuart called upon his command to take for their reward in the future, "Avenge Latane!"

Captain Royal, of the Federal forces, had also been badly wounded, and several of his men killed.

One of the cavalrymen had fallen from his horse, and lay writhing with a bullet through the breast, biting and tearing up the ground. He called for water, and a negro ran to a house near by to bring him some. On returning, he found a destitute rebel trooper robbing the dying man of his spurs!

Surely, war is a hard trade!

Stuart's command, Fitz Lee now pressed on, and burst like a whirlwind into the camp near Old Church, where large supplies of boots, pistols, liquors, and other

commodities belonging to the Federal army were found.

These were speedily appropriated by the men, and the tents were set on fire amid loud shouts.

The spectacle, as can readily be understood, was unique; but a report having got abroad among the marauders that one of the tents contained powder, the vicinity of the spot was evacuated in almost less than no time.

The whole rebel command was now at Old Church, where Stuart was to be guided in his further movements by circumstances.

He stood alone, with his head bent forward; he was evidently deeply reflecting. In a moment he raised his head, and turning to one of his aides-de-camp, said:

"Tell Fitz Lee to come along—I am going to move on with my column."

These words created all doubt, and those who heard him understood in an instant that the general had decided on the bold and hazardous plan of passing entirely round McClellan's army.

"What do you mean, sir?" he now wrote, the better," said one of his officers with a laugh. "Right!" replied Stuart, gravely; "tell the column to move on at a brisk trot."

So, at a rapid pace the column moved.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SCOUT SHOWS HIS GIFT.

Stuart's command when had reached Old Church, had been divided and destroyed all the stores there, and then had started on toward the Chickahominy, intending to strike it at a point below Long Bridge, and so recross the Confederate lines by way of Charles City.

Grit (Arroll, who seldom failed in any undertaking, had not come up with them.)

What was the reason of this?

He had been ordered to the left at a brisk trot.

Grit had ridden on for more than an hour, when, on suddenly turning a bend in the road, he discovered two cavalrymen just ahead of him, and the next moment saw that they were on horseback.

He soon overtook them, and found that they were out on a private foraging expedition.

He did not volunteer to make known his own business, but agreed to keep the company until they should reach the ford of a broad stream at no very great distance ahead.

At length the river came in view.

Just before reaching the stream there were two gates, within a short distance of each other, which had to be passed. There was a fence on the right side of the road, and another gate in that, opening into a field.

On the left there was no fence—simply an open field and a high hill.

Grit and his companions, to save time, had made a short cut, and were now coming across the field, and the left at a brisk trot.

At the very moment they came in sight of the first gate they saw a rebel officer and three men riding through. They also saw, at a short distance in the rear, several more coming on, but they did not stop.

"What shall we do—run or fight?" asked one of Grit's companions.

"Fight," responded Grit, setting his teeth tight together.

"Right!" exclaimed the other two in a breath.

"Then close up to receive their charge," warned the scout.

The rebels, having passed the gate, and been met by their comrades, pushed on toward the three Union men, who, instead of running, as the rebels expected they would, drew up in line to receive them.

"Charge!" cried the rebel officer; and at them they went.

Grit and his friends held their fire until the rebels were within five yards of them, when crack—crack—crack! went their revolvers, and down they fell.

Then they closed. The rebels were right in the midst of them with the saber, ordering them to surrender.

For a time they refused, and fought desperately, but the rebels being so much against them, Grit's companions at last called that they would surrender.

The officer now supposed the fight was over, and, drawing the trigger of his pistol right in his face and fired—so close, indeed, that the powder burned his ear.

How the man escaped with his life is a wonder.

Then, fired, the scout dashed away, and two of the rebels pushed on after him to cut him off from the gate.

The officer was terribly enraged, as many

readily be supposed, and rode at him full speed.

Grit fought desperately, killing one man and wounding another. Then three more came up.

Seeing himself now completely hemmed in, the scout lowered his sabre, which he had drawn, and called out that he would surrender.

The officer, with flashing eyes, rode up to him, and shook his fist at him, gritting his teeth.

"You soundred!" he exclaimed. "You black-headed villain! to fire on me after surrendering! I am almost tempted to blow your brains out with my pistol!"

"Not so fast!" said Grit, coolly. "I hadn't surrendered before, I want you to understand."

"You lie!" cried the officer, raising his pistol.

Grit was too quick for him; his was already raised.

Crack!—and down went the officer like a sack of meal.

"Curse you!" exclaimed a sergeant, dashing forward, while all the others, excepting the two champions of the two prisoners, joined him.

"Curse you!"—take that, and he fired a shot from his pistol.

It missed; and the next moment Grit's sabre flashed and clef his head open.

Then, quickly pushing forward against another, he knocked him from his horse.

Instead of making off, as he easily might, he next turned his attention to rescuing the two prisoners; and, dashing forward, made a stroke at the trooper in charge.

It missed him, but wounded the horse, which, with a loud snort, bounded off, carrying the wailing rider with him.

"Now, then, quick!" exclaimed Grit.

"We can't go through the gates; let us wheel around, and make for the upper ford."

"But my arms!" said one of the men.

"They're taken and dashed to tatters."

"You'll have to let them go," rejoined Grit, starting off.

"No!—by a thundering sight, I won't!" and the infuriated fellow actually sprung from his horse, snatched up a sabre, and, revolver, and regained his seat before the rebels could oppose him. Then, with a parting shot, he galloped off to rejoin his companions.

"Well, that was a mighty close shave," he laughed when he had overtaken them. Then, addressing Grit:

"By Jove! comrade, you're a regular trump! But if it hadn't been for your genuine Yankee pluck we'd have been in limbo now."

"Perhaps," rejoined Grit, calmly; "but I don't happen to be a Yankee, all the same."

"Not a Yankee! What the deuce are you then?"

"A Southerner—a native-born Virginian; and, for that matter, my home is not so very many miles distant—over yonder—pointing in the direction of the Rappahannock."

"Jehosophat! that gets me. I didn't know there was a Southerner of your regular out and our blue stripe in the Union army."

"Then you have much to learn," said Grit, "for the fact is, there are many of us—yes, a great many—and the Union is just as dear to us as to you. Look at General Thomas, he is a native Virginian; then there is Anderson, and a host of others of that name. I tell you, comrade, the South is by no means a unit in this unholy struggle."

"I'll believe that now. But say, comrade, how far have we got to go to find that other ford? The trouble is, we can't be too long away from camp—eh, Charley?"

"I'll suppose not," answered Charley; "but for all that, I don't propose to leave our new friend here until we've seen him safely over the river."

"I can't put yourselves out on my account," said Grit, "and yet, I'd like your company for a much longer distance than that. Having seen what you're made of, I'd like to have you take part in a little expedition."

"My friend," said Grit, "but I'm generally called scout, quietly."—but I'm generally called Grit Carroll, the scout of the Potomac."

"Lord! old fellow, we've heard of you a thousand times. We'll go with you, sure; won't we, Tom?"

"You just bet," was the hearty reply.

"I'm glad to hear it," exclaimed Grit, warmly.

"And so your name is Charley—Charley what?"

"Charley Clayton, and this is my very particular friend, Tom Merrett, a right royal good fellow, and true as steel."

"I can well believe it. Now let us hurry on."

They put their horses to a trot, and in due time, having reached the ford, crossed it without difficulty, and then took the most direct road leading to Old Church, which, on account of the wide detour they had been obliged to make, was still many miles distant.

CHAPTER VIII.

JEFFERSON WHITE APPEARS ON THE SCENE.

For several hours the three horsemen kept on at the same steady trot, and then they stopped by the side of a beautiful stream to rest and refresh themselves.

Presently a confused sound reached their ears, and quickly brought Grit to his feet.

"We've got nobodies," he said, "Charley, you and Tom lead the horses a little deeper into the underwood, while I go forward and reconnoiter."

They hastened to comply, while the scout quickly disappeared in the direction from whence the sound had come.

He was absent for some time. At last his comrades heard, approaching footsteps, and on looking up, beheld the scout, followed by a young darkey by the ear.

"You see, I thought it would be as well for us all to take part in the examination," he said, quietly.

"Where did you manage to pick up that piece of ebony?" asked Tom, curiously.

"Just beyond the edge of the woods, off in that direction," responded Grit. "He belongs to a mansion-house, which is just visible from there, and where I more than suspect there's a body of rebel cavalry at present."

"How's that, Ebony?" demanded Tom.

"Dat ain't my name, sah," responded the little darkey with much dignity.

"What is your name, then?" asked Charley.

"Julius Caesar Jefferson Hannibal Setback White, an' dey calls me Jeff for short."

"Lord, what a name! Well, we'll call you Jeff for short, too. Now then, Jeff, how many soldiers are there up at the house?"

"Reckon dar's 'bout fifty or twenty, sah. Fifty or twenty? That's definite. Can't you be more exact than that?"

"Wait a moment," said Grit, "let me put a question or two; where are the horses, Jeff?"

"They's tied to de picket fence, sah."

"How many men stay with the horses?"

"The boy considered for a moment, then he said:

"Four, sah."

"What's dat in Charley, suddenly. 'How many is four?'"

"As many as yous an' one more," promptly answered Jeff.

"Good! said Grit; "and now, where are the rebels?"

"Some ob 'em is in de house—some's on de piazza, an' some's lyin' under de trees on de ground."

"How many are in the house?"

"Jeff again considered.

"Dar's Lieutenant Dunbar," he said, at length, "dat's one."

"What's Lieutenant Dunbar of Latane's cavalry?" demanded the scout.

"Dat's him, sah."

"Hum! Well, who else?"

"Den dar's another officer, an' two mo' besides."

"Good! that makes eight so far. Now, on the piazza?"

"Dar's jist twice as many dar."

"Sixteen. Now, under the trees?"

"Dar's mo' dar dar on de piazza."

"How many more?"

"Don't know—free, four."

"Don't thirty in all," muttered Grit.

"We can't go on without making another detour, and even then we'll run the risk of their coming down upon us whenever we strike the road. We'd better rest where we are and wait."

"That may not be until night," objected Tom.

"Nevertheless, we had better wait," said Grit.

"This darkey—can we trust him?"

"I think so; but let's see. Jeff, when you get back to the house what are you going to tell them there?"

"The negro rolled his eyes about fearfully.

"Ain't gwine ter tell 'em nuffin'. Don't wauter bab' Mas' Linkums sagers killed. Don't fud me, shuah, sah."

"All right, my boy," said Grit, with great satisfaction; "and now, when Lieutenant Dunbar and his men have gone, will you come here and let us know?"

"Yes, sah."

"Do you see that?" and the scout held up a silver piece.

Again the boy's eyes rolled in his head, and this time he said nothing but the whites of them could be seen.

"Yes, mas'r, I sees dat," he affirmed.

How in the world he managed to do it under the circumstances is a wonder.

"All right," said Grit, "I'll keep quiet, and let us know when the Confederates go, and what road they take, this is yours."

"I'll do it, sah—I'll do it—shuah."

"Then off with you!" and the boy was gone in the twinkling of an eye.

"Can we trust him?" asked Tom, quickly.

"I think we can," answered the scout; "and yet, I am not going to do so implicitly; I am going up to the house myself, and that, too, right away."

"Can you do so in safety?" asked Charley, anxiously.

"Of course," was the reply; "watching the movements of the enemy is a part of my business, you know;" and Grit once more disappeared in the direction of the house.

This time he was gone much longer, and when he returned, he reported that the information they had obtained through Jeff was correct.

He had counted thirty cavalry horses, and had seen Lieutenant Ponton Dunbar, one of the windows of the house. Jeff was true to them, he said, and had not given the slightest hint of their being in the neighborhood.

"Do they show any signs of going?" asked Charley.

"No; and I am thinking that as soon as it is dark, we can safely push on by avoiding the road past the house."

"Then let us do so, by all means," exclaimed Tom.

"We will; but I must manage to see Jeff first and give him his silver piece, or at some other time might he be tempted to do us or some of our comrades an ill turn."

He hardly ceased speaking when the little darkey presented himself, and what was of quite as much importance, he had not come empty handed.

From a clean towel that had been carefully wrapped around it, he produced a nicely cooked chicken, and from a basket, he brought forth other and innumerable dainties.

"Where'd all these good things come from, Jeff?" demanded Grit, with a show of sternness.

"Mammy sent 'em. I tole her dat 'free ob Mas'r Linkum's sagers an' hid down hyer, an' she sent all dese yer wid her lub."

"Bless the dear old gal!" and Charley Clayton at once produced a silver dollar, which he earnestly entreated Jeff to give to his mother with his undying affection.

Tom also sent her a substantial gift, and Grit gave the boy the promised silver piece.

"Have you found out anything more about the scout the rebel troopers are going?" asked the scout.

"Yes, sah, dey's gwine in de night."

"Ah! that will do. Boys, we will have to be on our guard."

Jeff remained with them a long time, in fact, until he had seen the last morsel of the chicken disappear, and until all the other contingents had vanished forever. Then, confidentially informing them that he "speeted Mammy" & wanted his, he departed.

"That was a regular old-sage," sighed Tom, as he threw the last chicken bone upon the little heap they had made. "I wish we could come across a Jeff like this one every day."

"That would be too good—we should soon become fastidious," laughed Charley.

"Right," said the scout; "and now, let's get a wink of sleep, so that we may be off in the moment it's necessary to move in safety," and they stretched themselves on the ground, and Tom and Charley knew no more until they were gently roused by Grit, some hours later.

"Come, it's time we were off," he said, in a low tone. "I've found a path that will lead us by the house, without taking us too near it."

gone right away to London, where his wife died, an' that's why he hadn't seen much av her family; but he'd heard enough av thim, ye may be sure av that."

"Well, he came back, an' whin he tuck up his residence in Dublin he concluded to give a grand party; but he didn't send his sister-in-law, Miss Macan, who was livin' down in the west, an' invitation, but some wan else, out av divilment did, an' sure, she came."

"Now ye ought to be knowin' that this sister-in-law, Miss Macan, was a lady av about forty or more, but that she war always thinkin' she war as swate an' innocent a child as wan av less than twenty, an' that all the young fellows war wantin' to make love to her."

"As I was sayin', she came to the general's grand party, an' a friend av me own, wan Captain Powers, an aide to the general, determined to have some fun out av her, knowin' mighty well how it would an' noy her brother-in-law, an' tickle the company."

"Well, he made much av her, an' tuck her down to supper, an' thim he found a place for her at the head o' the table, an' he thought the right time had come to bring her out, so to spake, he began his blandishments in dead earnest. The first those about thim knew av what was goin' on war whin they suddenly heard a superin' faymly voice, exclaimin':

"Don't, now—don't, I tell ye; it's little ye know, captain, or ye wouldn't think to make up to me, wouldn't ye, fat?"

"Upon my soul, ye're an angel—a regular angel," says their captain. "I never saw a woman suit my fancy before, says he."

"Oh, behave, now," she cried. 'Father Magrath says—'

"Who's be?" asks their captain.

"The priest; no less," she says.

"Oh," confound him, says Powers.

"Confound Father Magrath, young man?"

"Well, thim, Judy, don't be angry; I only meant that a soldier knows more av such matters than a priest," says the captain.

"Well, thim, I'm not so sure av that," she tells him; 'but anyhow, I'd have ye to remember it ain't a Widow Malone ye have beside ye."

"Niver heard av the lady," says Powers, says he.

"Sure, it's a song—a poor cryature—it's a song she made up, her in the North Cork Regiment, whin they war quartered down in our country," she tells him. "I wish to Heaven you'd sing it," cries Powers.

"What will ye give me thim, av I do?" she whispers.

"Anything—everything—my heart, my life," says the captain.

"It's yours," says Powers, says he.

"I would."

"An' would ye give me that beautiful green ring on yer finger beside?" she asks.

"Yes," says Powers, plain; 'it graces fully upon Miss Macan's finger, an' now for your promise."

"May be me brother-in-law might not like it," she objects.

"He'd be delighted," says Powers; 'he jist does on music."

"Does he, now?"

"On my honor, he does," declares the wickedly wily captain.

"Well, mind ye get up a good chorus," she says, 'fur the song has wan, an' here it is."

"Miss Macan's song!" cries Powers, tapin the table wid his knife.

"Miss Macan's song!" was echoed an' re-echoed on all sides; and before the unlucky general could interfere, she had begun.

"An' this is phat she sung," continued Tim:

"Did ye hear av the Widow Malone
Who lived in the town av Athlone
Oh! she melted the hearts
Of the swains in thim parts,
So lovely the Widow Malone,
Ohone!

So lovely the Widow Malone,
That he loved her as well as I do,
An' fortunes they all had galore,
Ohone!

From the minister down
To the clerk av the droghda,
All were courtin' the Widow Malone,
Ohone!

All were courtin' the Widow Malone,
But so modest was Mrs. Malone,
No one liver could see her alone,
Ohone!

Let thim ogles an' sighs,
They could ne'er see her ere—
So bashful the Widow Malone,
Ohone!

So bashful the Widow Malone,
Till wan Mister O'Brien from Clare,
It's little for blushin' they care,
Ohone!

Put his arm round her waist,
Gave thim kisses at last,
Oh, says he, 'you're my Molly Malone—
Ohone!

'Oh, says he, 'you're my Molly Malone—
Ohone!

'An' the widow they all thought so shy,
My eye!

Ne'er thought of a slapper or scold,
For why?

But, 'Lucius,' says she,
'Since you've made me so free,
You may marry your Mary Malone!'
Ohone!

You may marry your Mary Malone!
Ohone!

'That's a moral containin' no harm,
Not wrong;

And one comfort it's not very new,
But strong:

If for widows you die,
Learn to kiss, not to sigh,
For they're all like sweet Mistress Malone,
Ohone!

Oh, they're very like Mistress Malone."

To explain the air to which Tim sung this song would be impossible; indeed, I am inclined to think it never had a name; but, at the end of each verse, a species of echo followed the last word, that rendered it irresistibly ridiculous.

"The boys yelled and shouted in their merriment; some even rolling over and over on the ground in their paroxysms of laughter and delight."

It was some time before the lieutenant could make himself heard; but at last he managed to ask:

"Well, Tim, what did the general and his friends think of that song?"

"Sure, thim," said Tim, "niver did song create such a sensation as that same wan av Miss Macan; an' certainly her desires as to the chorus were followed to the letter."

"The chorus," rejoined the lieutenant, "was from wan ind av the table to the other, and wan universal shout av laughter—the same as it did here."

"None could resist the ludicrous effects av her song," says he; "even the poor general, sinkin' under the disgrace of his relationship—which she had contrived to make public by frequent allusions to her 'dear brother, the lieutenant'—retired at last, and joined in the mirth around him."

"Well, we ought to have a drink after that—don't you think so, captain?" said Fairchild.

"Tim, I wish up two or three of those bottles out o' the stream. We'll see if we can't do justice to the governor's wine."

"I'm quite willin'," grinned the Irishman, as he started to his feet.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE UNION CAMP.

Lieutenant Fenton Dunbar and his detachment of cavalry did not leave the mansion until some hours after Grit Carroll and his companions had departed from the vicinity; but, then, anxious to overtake the main column, they pressed on with all speed until about one o'clock, when they reached an inviting spot by the side of a pleasant stream, where the lieutenant ordered them to halt.

At the plantation they had supplied themselves with something in the way of rations, and, when the lieutenant had eaten his frugal repast, he wandered forth, and, upon the bank of the stream, now standing alone, watched his bold sweeps as it traversed the lovely valley before him, now turning to catch a passing glance at the camp-fire, and the hardy figures which sat around it.

The hoarse and careless laugh, the deep-toned voice of some old campaigner giving forth his tale of flood and field were the only sounds he heard; and gradually he strolled beyond the reach of even these.

The path beside the river, which seemed worn in the rock, was barely sufficient for the passage of one man, the underwood growing along its edge being the only defense against the precipice, which, from a height of full twenty-five feet, looked down upon the stream.

And there, from some broad gleam of sunlight would fall upon the opposite bank, which, unlike the one he occupied, stretched out into rich meadow and pasturage, relieved by occasional clumps of beech and holly.

River scenery had ever been a passion with him. He could glory in the bold and broken outline of a mighty mountain—he could gaze with delighted eyes upon the boundless sea, and knew not whether to like it more in all the mighty outpouring of its wrath, when the white waves lifted their heads to heaven, and broke themselves in foam upon the rocky beach, or in the beauty of its broad and mirrored surface, in which the bright world of sun and sky were seen full many a fathom deep.

Far above all these, he loved the happy and tranquil beauty of some bright river, tracing its winding current through valley and through plain, now spreading into some calm and waveless lake, now narrowing to an eddying stream, with mossy rocks and waving trees darkening over it.

There was not a cabin, however lowly, where the poet-like Irishman would perch upon the sward, around whose hearth he did not picture before him the faces of happy toil and humble contentment, while, from the deserted mansion or ruined hall, on oak or hillside, he imagined he heard the ancient sounds of good cheer and welcome.

As he wandered on, he reached the narrow path which led down to the river side; and, on examining further, perceived that in this place the stream was fordable; a huge flat rock, filling up a great part of the river bed, occupied the middle, on either side of which the current ran with increased force.

Bent upon exploring, he descended the cliff, and was preparing to cross, when his attention was attracted by a light glimmer at some distance from him, on the opposite side of the narrow stream that fed the river. The flame rose and fell in fitful flashes, as though some hand was ministering to it at the moment.

As it seemed impossible, from the silence on every side, that it could proceed from an encampment of any great number of the enemy, he cautiously approached it and examining it for himself.

He knew that the negroes sometimes built fires on the river banks. It was not impossible, too, that it might prove a guerrilla party, who frequently, in small numbers, hung upon the rear of a moving column.

Thus conjecturing, he crossed the smaller stream, and, quickening his pace, walked forward in the direction of the light.

For a moment a projecting rock obstructed his progress; and, while he was devising some means of proceeding further, the sound of voices near him arrested his attention.

He listened, and was sure the speakers were soldiers, but as yet could not tell to which army they belonged.

He now crept cautiously to the verge of the rock, and, before him, a narrow and a little shelving strand beside the stream, and here he now beheld the figure of a Union cavalryman.

He was in the uniform of a common soldier, but wore no arms. Indeed, his occupation at that moment was anything but a warlike one, he being leisurely employed in collecting some bottles of wine which apparently had been left to cool within the stream.

"Confound it, Tim!" said a voice in the direction of the fire; "what are you delaying for?"

"Sure, thim, I'm comin', ser," said the other; "but, be the powers! I can only find five av their bottles. Wan av them seems to have been carried away by the stream."

"No matter," replied the other. "As I told you, we only want two or three of them now; perhaps you can find the missing one later."

The only answer to this was the muttered chorus of an Irish song, of which Dunbar could only make out:

"Oh, they're all like sweet Mistress Malone,
Ohone!

Oh, they're very like Mistress Malone,
Ohone!

This was interrupted at intervals by imprecations on the missing bottle.

It chanced just then that a slight clinking noise attracted the attention of the lieutenant, and, looking down, he perceived at the foot of the rock the prize the other sought for.

It had been, as he conceived, carried away by the eddy of the stream, and was borne, as a true prisoner of war, within the Confederate's grasp.

From this moment his interest in the scene became considerably heightened. Such a wait as a good bottle of wine was not to be despised in circumstances like his; and he watched with anxious eyes every gesture of the impatient Irishman, and alternately vied between hope and fear, as he heard or recoiled from the missing bottle.

"Let it go to perdition," shouted a voice from the fire, "Captain! Ingold and Grit here have lost all patience, and are waiting for you."

"All right," he says, "I'm willin' to send the divil a good bottle av wine, I've no more to say;" and the Irishman prepared to take up his burden.

At this instant Dunbar made a slight effort to change his position so as to obtain a view of the rest of the party.

The branch by which he supposed him-

self, however, gave way beneath his grasp without a loud crash.

He lost his footing, and slipping downward from the rock, came plump into the stream below.

The noise, the splash, and, more than all, the sudden appearance of a man beside him, astonished the Irishman, who almost fell all his gathered beliefs; and thus they stood colourless and dumb for at least a couple of minutes in silence.

A hearty burst of laughter from both parties terminated this awkward moment, and the Irishman, with the readiness of his countrymen, was the first to open the negotiation.

"Howly Bridget!" exclaimed he, 'what can ye be doin' here? You're a rebel widout doubt!"

"Even so," laughed Dunbar; "but that is the very question I was about to ask you; what are you doing here?"

"Sure, thin," replied Tim, "I'll not be long in tellin' ye that. Captain Ingold war wounded in the action at the bridge, an' we heard had been brought up this way by some nags, when Stuart war out of av our reach, we got permission to come an' see him; an' we found him early this mornin'; an' not only that, but we came across a number of good things by the way—among them these bottles. We're on our way to the Federal lines, but some of us don't strong, wan av us wid an ugly sabre cut in his shoulder. It ye are the stronger party, we are, I suppose, your prisoners; if not—"

"What was to have followed, it would be hard to say, for at this moment an officer, who had finally lost all patience, came suddenly to the spot.

"A prisoner," cried he, placing a heavy hand on Fenton Dunbar's shoulder, while with the other he held his drawn sword pointed toward his breast."

For Dunbar to draw a pistol from his bosom was but the work of a second, and while gently turning the point of the Union officer's weapon away, he coolly said:

"Not so fast, my friend, not so fast! The game is in my hands, not yours. I have only got to this to tell you, my friend, that your number, are upon you; whatever fate befalls me, yours is certain."

A half-scornful laugh betrayed the incredulity of the Union officer, while the Irishman appeared to be in no haste to withdraw from the moment, suddenly broke in with:

"Sure, thin, he's roight, lieutenant, darlint, an' savin' yer presnee, you're wrong; war he in his power. That is wrong; be with a peculiar Irish grin, "av he belaves there's any great triumph in capturin' sich a little mess av poor divils as ourselves."

The features of the Union officer suddenly lost their scornful expression, and sheathing his sword with a certain air of resignation, he calmly said:

"If this be so, I fear we must submit. I have a dear friend here—a brother officer, who is badly wounded; were it otherwise it might be different. I can't fly and leave him, you know; but were he only in a place of safety, I'd not mind meeting three, ay, even four times as many as you."

Fenton Dunbar smiled. It was not an unpleasant or sarcastic smile, but rather one of rare good humor.

The Union officer saw the smile and quickly interpreting it as a good augury, cheerfully said:

"So, then, you'll not make us prisoners this time. Am I not right?"

"Prisoners, no," said Tim, officiously. "Shure, thin, he'll do nothin' av the kind. Come an' take a bite wid us, sor; I'll venture to say we'll give ye as good mate as ye'll get up above here. In our case at all, a little cold chicken, an' a bit of ham, an' we ain't no bad things in our circumstances."

Fenton could not help laughing outright at the strangeness of the proposal.

"I greatly fear I must decline," he said; "you seem to be ordered to stay here at this time to watch, not to join you."

"To ther divil wid yer scruples," cried the Irishman. "Sure, thin, do both. Come along wid me, like a good fellow; ye are always near our own men, so don't refuse us."

"Yes, yes; do come, lieutenant," said the Union officer, cordially; "You shall be made very welcome."

Tim again shook his head. But in proportion as he declined, they both became more pressing in their entreaties, and at last beginning to dread lest his refusal might seem to proceed from some fear as to the goodness of the invitation, he said:

"This really is an awkward position you

place me in. I dislike to refuse you, and yet—"

"Come, come; don't be foolish, that's a good fellow," said the other officer.

"But duty, discipline," said Dunbar, "this isn't quite the thing, you know. And then, my own men, what—"

"Arrah, now, don't be thinkin' av them," interrupted Tim.

"But once, please, add the Union officer; "in an hour—in half an hour, if you will—you shall be back with your men; we've plenty of fighting lately, and we're sure to have enough of it in future. We know something of each other in the field; let us see how we get on together around the camp-fire."

Resolving not to be outdone in generosity, Fenton once replied:

"Here goes then! Lead the way, lieutenant."

A moment later he was at the camp-fire.

To his utter amazement, one of the men seated there instantly started to his feet with the involuntary exclamation:

"Fenton Dunbar!"

He scrutinized the man's features closely. "That duty, discipline," at last, "I have seen you before; and yet—"

"I am Clinton Carroll," said the other, simply.

"Clinton Carroll!" echoed Dunbar, "and in that uniform?"

CHAPTER XI.

SURPRISED BY GUERRILLAS.

"Yes, Fenton," said Grit Carroll, calmly.

"I belong to the Union army. I fight as I believe I have a perfect right to fight, for my unalterable convictions. I have ever believed that secession was wrong—more than a crime; nay, worse than a crime; hence, I am here. I belong to Burnham's cavalry. This is my lieutenant. Permit me to make you acquainted with Lieutenant Fairchild. I know you both well, and am sure two better men never met."

Lieutenant Fairchild then introduced his guest to Captain Ingold, and, with a wave of his hand made him known to the others about the fire.

After this, Dunbar turned to Grit and said:

"I am very glad to meet you again, Mr. Carroll, and while I am an officer in the Confederate army, I permit me to assure you that, knowing you and your family so well as I do, I am thoroughly persuaded that conviction, and conviction alone has led you into the Union ranks, and therefore, instead of thinking less of you, I honor you for the step you have taken, knowing what a sacrifice it must have cost."

"Thank you, Fenton," said the scout. "I am very glad indeed to retain your friendship, and I believe the time is not far distant when I shall be able to do you a really friendly turn; but, no more of that at present."

Several of the bottles of wine were now opened, and between eating and drinking, Dunbar listened to many a good story.

At length Captain Ingold raised himself a little, and addressed him a question. Fenton rose to answer it.

"Do you know, captain, it strikes me I have seen you before, and not so very long ago, either?"

"It is possible," rejoined the captain; "but it should judge it could only have been in action."

"Were you in the valley recently?" asked Fenton.

"Yes, sir, it was there I gained my company," was the reply.

"Ah! and it was there I saw you—at Winchester, I think. Tell us about your part in the engagement, captain."

"At Winchester," said the captain, reflectively. "You should have seen them, if you didn't. The command in which I was a lieutenant was ordered to form close column, and charge through a narrow ravine to carry a battery of guns, which, by a flanking fire, were devastating our troops. Before we could reach the point aimed at, we were obliged to pass an open plain, in which the grand right wing of about a hundred and fifty riders or more, the column moved on, and, though it descended one hill, not a man ever mounted the opposite one. A very avalanche of balls swept the column, and, as yet, and the thunder, and the smoke, the red glare of the artillery, and the carnage around them, our troops pressed firmly on."

At last General Shields sent an aide-de-camp with orders for us to dismount and lay flat down, and in this position the artiller-

ery played over us for more than half an hour.

"The Confederates gradually slackened, and, finally discontinued their fire; this was the moment to resume our attack."

"I crept cautiously to my knees, and looked about. One word brought my men around me; but I found, to my horror, that, of a full squadron who came into action, not a hundred remained; and that I myself, a mere lieutenant, was now the senior officer. "Our gallant commander lay dead beside my feet. At this instant a thought struck me."

"I remembered a habit he possessed, in moments of difficulty and danger, of placing in his hat a small yellow plume which he commonly carried in his belt."

"I took it up, and stuck it in."

"As I held it aloft, a maddening cheer burst around me, while, from out the line, each officer sprang madly forward, and rushed to the head of the column."

"It was no long march. With a loud cry of vengeance, the mass pressed forward, the men trying to outstrip their officers, and come first in contact with the foe."

"Like thunder, the springing fire fell upon the enemy, who—crushed, overwhelmed, and massacred—lay in slaughtered heaps around the cañon."

A fresh regiment of cavalry came thunder-

dering on behind us, a whole division followed, many prisoners were taken and the whole battery was captured.

"I sat upon the carriage of one of the guns, my face begrimed with powder, and my uniform blackened and blood-stained. The whole thing appeared like some horrible dream. I felt a hand upon my shoulder, while a rough voice called in my ear, "Captain, you did some glory enough for one day. Remember, from this moment, I am your friend!"

"It was General Shields who spoke. This," added the brave captain, his eyes filling as he spoke the words, "this is the sabre he gave me."

"Sure, thin, the general's a thump," exclaimed Tim, flourishing a half-empty bottle above his head.

"How do you know anything about it?" demanded Fairchild.

"How do I know anything about it, is it?" said Tim. "Why, thin, sure, he's a countryman, an' he knows, so can't be anything else but a decent lad."

"Ha-ha! he's got you there, lieutenant," laughed Ingold.

"I say, Tim," said one of the men, suddenly, "the general's got into trouble shortly after you enlisted, and while you were on guard duty near the treasury department at Washington?"

"Arrah! go away, ye now. Don't be rakin' up old stories at this late day," rejoined Tim, with a broad grin upon his face.

"Come, come, Tim," cried the lieutenant; "tell us all about it. Give us a chance to condole with you man."

"Well, thin, ef ye will have it, ye will; but, sure, there's very little to tell. It war me first experience at guard-mountin', an' I strutted along me beaf wid a full appreciation of the dignity and importance of my position. By the way, a gentleman approached, an', I shouted out at him:

"Halt!—who comes there?"

"A citizen," says he, as mild as milk.

"A citizen, citizen, an' give ther counter-sign, says I, as fierce as I cud say it."

"I haven't the counter-sign," he says; 'an', if I had, the demand for it at this time an' place is something very different."

"What's that?" says I, as fierce as I cud say it. "I yell at him, fiercer nor ever, 'ye don't pass this way at all, till ye say Bunker Hill, so ye don't.'"

"Sure, thin, the citizen seemed ter appreciate the sign, an' he said, 'ye are right, an' I whisper into me ear ther words 'Bunker Hill' just as if he know'd thim all the while."

"Right! Pass on," I says, straightening me up, an' sayin' 'an' pass on.' That's all there was about it, only ther b'ys got the laugh onto me, an' made me think I'd got meself into a hape av trouble."

Tim's little story created quite a burst of merriment, and the night might have lasted, it is hard to say; for all at once they were startled into silence by the tramp of horses near them.

They listened breathlessly, and could plainly detect in their rude voices and coarse laughter the approach of a body of guerrillas.

They looked from one to the other in silence for a few moments.

Nothing could be more unfortunate should they be discovered.

Upon this point they were left little time to deliberate; for, with a loud cheer, a band of horsemen galloped up to the spot, their carbines in rest.

"There are my prisoners," said Dunbar, making a resolute resistance.

As for Daubar, his determination was at once decided. Remaining quietly seated by the fire, he stirred not for a minute, but, addressing the one who appeared to be the chief of the guerrillas, calmly said:

"These are my prisoners; I am a Confederate officer of cavalry, and my party is your."

This evidently unexpected declaration sent the soldiers shuddering, and they stood for a few moments together. Meanwhile, they were joined by several others, in one of whom could easily be recognized, by his costume, the real leader of the party.

"I am an officer of cavalry," said Fenton, repeating his declaration.

"Friends of perdition!" replied the leader; "it is false; you are a cursed spy!"

"You need not sneer from my lip to lip of his party, and Dunbar saw, in the lowering looks and darkening features that the moment was a critical one for him.

"Down with your arms!" cried the guerrillas, turning to the Federals. "Surrender yourselves our prisoners; I'll not bid you twice!"

Fairchild, and those with him, turned upon Dunbar, inquiring look, as though to say that upon him now their hopes entirely rested.

"Do as he bids you," said the young Confederate; while at the same moment he sprang to his feet, and gave a loud, shrill whistle, the last echo of which had not died away in the distance ere it was replied to.

"Make no mistake now," said Fenton to the Union men; "our safety depends on this."

While this was passing, two of the guerrillas had dismounted, and, detaching a coil of rope which hung from their saddle-bags, were proceeding to tie the prisoners' right wrist; the others, with their carbines to the shoulder, covered them man by man, the chief of the party having singled out Dunbar as the person to be bound.

"The fate of young Carroll and a good many others I could name might have taught you better," he said, "than to play this game," and then, with a grin, he said: "But we'll see, if you are a gunner, if you can't dance on nothing as well as the best Yankee of them all."

This cruel speech fairly made young Dunbar's blood run cold, but the guerrilla chief's triumph over his terror was short-lived enough, for scarcely had the words fallen from his lips, when his own party, rushing through the little stream at a gallop, came riding up.

The attitude of the guerrillas as they sat with presented arms, was sufficient for Fenton's men, who needed not the exhortation of the sergeant, who rode foremost of the party.

"Ride 'em down, boys! Tumble 'em over! Flatten 'em out!" the infernal thieves!"

"That's the way," cried the chief, as, seizing a heavy stick, he rushed at the chief. Then with a whack that was heard above the din, he tumbled him from his horse, and here he could recover his feet was under him, his knee pressed upon the guerrilla's neck.

"Isn't it enough for you to yell like the whole country, ye dirty spalpeen, widout wantin' to be the first to shed the blood of a wounded man amongst them?" cried he, as he held him fast to the earth with one hand, while he presented a loaded revolver to his face with the other.

By this time the whole scene was sufficiently ludicrous. Such of the guerrillas as had not been thrown by force from their saddles had slid peacefully down, and deposited their arms upon the ground, were earnestly begging for mercy.

Leaving the chief to be dealt with as Tim should see fit, Dunbar ordered the others to rise and form in line before him, affecting to occupy himself entirely with them, he withdrew the attention of all from the Union officers and men, who, with the single exception of Tim, remained quiet spectators of the scene around them.

"Now's your time, gentlemen," said Fenton, addressing Ingold and Fairchild in a whisper; "get to your horses and away! It's now or never, my society."

A warm grasp of the hand from each was the only reply, and he turned once more to his discomfited friends, the guerrillas.

"There, Tim," he laughed, "let the poor devil rise. I confess, so far as I am concerned, that appearances were very strong against me just now."

Then, as the Irishman obeyed him, and the guerrilla slowly rose to his feet:

"Well, captain, are you convinced by this time that I was not deceiving you?"

The young chief muttered some words of apology between his teeth, and while he shook the dust from his clothes and arranged the broken plume of his hat, cast a look of scorn and indignation meaning, "you Tim, whose cold treatment he had evidently not forgiven."

"Don't be lukin' at me that way, ye dirty thafe, or I'll—"

"No more of this!" exclaimed Dunbar; "no more of this!" Then in a hasty aside: "Off with you, Tim; off with you! See, your friends will be leaving you behind," and quickly turned to the chief to attract and hold his attention, while the Irishman scud away.

"Come, captain, come, gentlemen, we must be friends, if I mistake not, we go to the rear, like refugees, to our camp above there. In any case you'll partake of our camp-fire for an hour or so."

The invitation was gladly accepted, and ere half an hour had elapsed the sudden and most unaccountable escape of the little Union party was quite forgotten.

CHAPTER XII.

STUART'S RAID.

The most exciting portion of Stuart's raid now began.

From the moment he left Old Church it was no end or nothing—do or die. He had no chance of escape against ten of capture or destruction.

The rebel general had decided upon his course, and that rapidly, clear judgment, and decision, which were the real secrets of his splendid efficiency as a leader of cavalry—in which capacity, it is safe to say, he has seldom been surpassed, either in the late war, or any other.

He was now in the very heart of the country controlled by the Federals, with their enormous masses upon every side.

He had no aid, no other force, as we have seen, passed within sight of the white tents of General McClellan's headquarters, burned their camps, and ascertained that he wished to know.

How was he to return?

He could not cross the Pamunkey, and make a circuit back; he had no pontoons. He could not return over the route by which he came, as the army was already proved, the alarm had been given, and an overpowering force of infantry, cavalry, and artillery had been rapidly moved in that direction.

Capture stared him in the face, on both these routes—across the Pamunkey, or back as he came; he must, then, find some other loophole of escape.

Such was the dangerous posture of affairs, and such was the important problem which Stuart decided in five minutes. He determined, as we have already said, to make the complete circle of McClellan's army; and, crossing the Chickahominy below Long Bridge, re-enter the Confederate lines from Charles City. If on his way he encountered cavalry he intended to fight it; if a heavy force of infantry barred his way he would elude, or, if possible, cut a path through it; if driven to the wall and debarred from escape he did not mean to surrender.

He counted on—that all understood.

At a steady trot, with drawn sabers and carbines ready, the cavalry, followed by the horse-artillery, approached Tunstall's Station on the York River Railroad, the Federal line of communication with their base of supplies at the White House.

Every where the ride was crowded with incident.

Outflanking and flanking parties constantly picked up stragglers, and overhauled unsuspecting wagons filled with the most tempting stores.

In this manner, a wagon, stocked with champagne, and every variety of wines, belonging to a general of the Union army fell a prey to the ever-thirsty graycoats.

Still they pressed on.

When an attack was expected in front or rear, Colonel Martin commanded the latter.

"Tell Colonel Martin," ordered Stuart,

"to have his artillery ready, and look out for an attack at any moment."

Hardly had the message been delivered, when a loud cheer rang along the line.

"Yankees in the rear!—Yankees in the rear!"

Every sabre flashed; four were formed, the men wheeled about, when, all at once, a thundering volley rang along the line. It was a cannon!

The column moved up again with its flanking parties well out. The men composing the line were, many of them, from the region, and for the first time for months saw their mothers and sisters.

These went quite wild at sight of their sons and brothers. They laughed and cried, and on the appearance of the long gray column instead of the familiar bluecoats of the Federal cavalry, they clapped their hands, and fell into ecstasies of delight. One young lady was seen to throw her arms around brother she had not before met for a long time, bursting into alternate sobs and laughter.

The column was now skirting the Pamunkey, and a detachment hurried off to seize and burn two or three transports lying in the river.

Soon a dense cloud rose from them; the flames soared up, and the column pushed on.

Every where was seen the traces of flight—for the alarm of "horns in the hive" was given.

Wagons had turned over, and were abandoned—from others the excellent army stores had been hastily thrown. Many things lay about in tempting array; but the Confederates were approaching Tunstall's where, doubtless, they would make a charge; and to load down their weary horses they knew was injudicious.

The advance guard was now in sight of the railroad.

There was no question about the affair before them. The column must cut through, whatever force guarded the road; to reach the lower Chickahominy the guard here must be overpowered.

Now was the time to use the artillery, and every effort was made to hurry it forward; but, alas! it was too late, for on a tremendous mud-hole, and the wheels were buried up to the axle.

The horses were lashed, and jumped, almost breaking the traces; the drivers swore, the harness cracked; but the guns did not move.

"Mine Got in Himmel! Lieutenant," said a sergeant of Dutch origin to Lieutenant McGregor, "dell vos can't you can't. Put fus on put dot keg of whiskey on dot gun," pointing, as he spoke, to a keg of liquor in an ambulance, the spoil of the Federal camp; "and dell de poy's they can hafe it if they can't pull through, and you will see vat will happens!"

McGregor laughed, and the keg was quickly perched on the gun.

Then took place an exhibition of herculean muscularity which would have delighted Guy Livingstone.

With eyes fixed ardently upon the keg, the powerful cannoners waded into the mud, and, with their knees, seized the wheels of gun and caisson loaded down with ammunition, and just simply lifted the whole out and put them on firm ground.

The piece which once the keg had been dismounted, and the cannoners revelled in the spoils they had earned.

Tunstall's was now nearly in sight, and an officer of the advance guard came back and reported that two companies of infantry at the railroad.

His commander, he said, had politely beckoned to him as he reconnoitered, exclaiming, in rhymed accents, full of Teutonic blandishment:

"Koom yay!"

But this cordial invitation was disregarded.

Then the voice of Stuart rang out:

"Form platoons! draw sabers!—charge!"

At the command, the sabers flashed, a thundering shout arose, and, sweeping on in column, the gray horsemen fell upon their blue adversaries, gobbling them up, almost without a shot.

The men swarmed upon the railroad.

Axes were quickly applied to the telegraph poles, which, cut crashing down, and a detachment was sent to burn a small bridge on the railroad near.

Suddenly, in the midst of the tumult, was heard the whistle of a train coming from the direction of the Chickahominy.

Stuart quickly drew up his men in a line on the side of the road, and he had no sooner

done so than the train came slowly round a wooded bend and bore down.

When within two hundred yards, it was ordered to halt; but the command was not obeyed.

The engineer crowded on all steam—the train rushed on; and then a thundering volley was opened upon the "flats" containing officers and men.

The engineer was shot by one of Stuart's staff-officers, and a number of soldiers were wounded.

The rest threw themselves upon the faces; the train rushed headlong by, like some frightened monster bent upon escape, and, in an instant, it had disappeared.

Stuart now reflected for a moment.

The question was, should he go back and attack the White House, where enormous stores were piled up, or not?

It was tempting; but a considerable force of infantry was posted there; the firing had doubtless given them the alarm, and the attempt was too hazardous.

It was the thing for that gray column was to set their faces toward home, and keep moving, well closed up, both night and day, for the Chickahominy.

So Stuart pushed on.

CHAPTER XIII. IN A TIGHT PLACE.

Beyond the railroad the Confederate raiders came upon a world of wagons, loaded with grain and coffee, standing in the road, abandoned.

Quick work was made of them. They were all set on fire and their contents destroyed.

These vagabonds, however, were only the *avant-couriers*—the advance guard—of the main body. In a field beyond the stream thirty acres were covered with them. The men were all armed by these destroying "angels" in gray.

The roar of the snoring flames was like the sound of a forest on fire. How they roared and crackled! The sky overhead, when night had descended, was bloody-looking in the glare.

Meanwhile the main column had moved on.

Presently, Stuart's voice was heard in the darkness, exclaiming with strange agitation:

"Who is here?" "I am," responded one of his staff, whose voice was recognized.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Where is Colonel Lee?"

"I think he has moved on, general."

"Do you know it?" "He came in the same agitation."

"No; but I believe it."

"Will you swear to it? I must know! He may take the wrong road, and the column will get separated."

"I will ascertain if he is in front," said the staff officer.

"Well, do so; but take care—you will get captured."

"Never fear, general!" and the officer started on ahead.

He had not gone two hundred yards in the darkness when hoof-strokes in front were heard.

"Halt! Who goes there?" he cried.

"Courier—from Colonel Lee," was the answer.

"Is he in front?"

"About a mile, sir."

"Good!" exclaimed the voice of Stuart, who had galloped up; and the accent was one of intense relief.

If the reader has ever commanded cavalry, he will have seen with a bow moving at night in an enemy's country, he will easily understand why Stuart drew that long, deep breath, and uttered that single word, "Good!" Once separated from the main column, and lost—good-by then to Colonel Lee.

"Now my mind's relieved on this score," said the general to his aid, "there's another matter: has anything been heard of Lieutenant Fenton Dunbar and his detachment?"

"They joined the main body more than an hour ago, general."

Such good news. Did he meet with any losses?

"Better and better. Now let us advance in dead earnest."

Pushing on by large hospitals, which, he said to their praise, were not interfered with, they reached at midnight the three or four houses known as Talleyville; and here a halt was ordered to rest men and horses, and permit the artillery to come up.

This pause was fatal to a sutler's store, from which the owner fled. One of Stuart's officers proudly boasted that when the place was remorselessly consumed, and he had been ordered, he himself eat in succession figs, beef-tongue, pickles, candy, tomato catsup, preserves, lemons, cake, sausages, molasses, crackers, and canned meats.

The presence of these attractive commodities the spirits of many rose. Those who in the morning had said: "Stuart is going to get his command wiped out—this movement is madness," now regarded him with admiration, and the raid as a feat of splendor and judicious daring, which could not fail in terminating successfully.

Behold! such is the difference in the views of the military machine, under such a leader. In the morning the column turned again. They were now on the road to Forge Bridge.

The highway lay before them, white in the unclouded splendor of the moon.

The critical moment was yet to come.

Their safety was to turn apparently on a throw of the dice, rattled in the hand of chance.

The exhaustion of the march now began to tell on the men. Whole companies went to sleep in the saddle, and even Stuart himself was no exception.

He had thrown one knee over the pommel of his saddle, folded his arms, dropped the bridle, and, chin on breast, his plumed hat dropping over his face, was sound asleep.

His sure-footed horse moved steadily, but the form of the general tottered from side to side, and in a mile or one of his staff held him steady by the arm.

The column thus moved on during the remainder of the night, the wary advance guard encountering no enemies, and giving no alarm.

At the first streak of dawn the Chickahominy was in sight, and Stuart was spurting forward to the ford.

It was impossible!

The heavy rain had so swollen the waters that the crossing was utterly impracticable!

Here, then, were the Confederate raiders within a few miles of McClellan's army, with an army of their own, and yet unable to make them rue the day they had circumvented them, and inflicted on them such injury and insult. Here they were with a swollen and impassable stream directly in front, and the angry waters roaring around the half-submerged trunks of the trees, and expecting every instant to hear the crack of carbines from the rear-guard, indicating the Federal's approach.

The situation was not pleasing.

All felt that the enemy would be upon them in less than an hour, and death or capture would be the sure alternative.

Hope was at a ebb.

Some attempted to swim their horses over the river, but both they and their cattle were nearly drowned among the tangled roots and snags.

"What do you think of the situation at this moment?" asked an officer of Colonel Lee.

"Well, captain," was the reply, in the speaker's initial tone of courtesy, "I think we are caught."

"That's about the way to put it," muttered those standing near.

The scene upon the river's bank was curious, and under other circumstances would have been laughable.

The men lay about in every attitude, half overcome with sleep, but holding their bridles, and ready to mount at the first alarm.

Others sat on their horses asleep, with drooping shoulders. Some gnawed crackers; others ate figs, smoked or yawned.

Things looked blue; and that color was figuratively spread over the landscape.

There was one man who never desponded or lost hope. That was Stuart. He had never been in such a tight place before, but he seemed to rise under the great pressure.

He was thoroughly aroused—strung for the hard struggle before him, and resolved to die or die; but he was not excited.

All that was noticed in his bearing to attract a hostile eye was a certain action of twisting his beard—certain proof with him of surrounding peril; otherwise he was cool, and looked dangerous.

He said a few words to Colonel Lee, found the ford impassable, and then, ordering his column to move on, galloped down the stream to a spot where an old bridge had formerly stood.

Reaching this point, a strong rear-guard was thrown out, the artillery placed in

position, and Stuart set to work vigorously to rebuild the bridge, determined to save his guns or die trying.

The bridge had been completely destroyed, but the stone abutments remained, some thirty or forty feet apart; for the river here ran deep and narrow between deep banks.

Between these stone sentinels, facing each other, was an arching void, which it was necessary to fill.

Stuart gave his personal superintendence to the work; he and his staff laboring with the masonry.

A skiff was procured. This was affixed by a rope to a tree in the mid-current above the abutments; and thus a movable pier was made of the logs of the forest.

An old barn was then hastily torn to pieces, and robbed of its timbers. These were stretched down to the boat and up to the opposite abutment, and a foot-bridge was thus ready.

Large numbers of the men immediately unsaddled their horses, took their equipments over; and then, returning, drove or rode their horses into the stream, and swam them across.

In this manner a considerable number crossed; but the process was much too slow.

There, besides, was the artillery, which Stuart had no intention of leaving.

A regular bridge must be built without a moment's delay, and to this work the Confederate leader now applied himself with ardor.

Heavier blows resounded from the old barn; huge timbers approached, borne on brawny shoulders; and, descending into the boat, anchored in the middle of the stream, the men began to throw across.

They were just long enough; the ends rested on the abutments, and immediately thick planks were hurried forward and laid crosswise, forming a secure footway for the cavalry and artillery horses.

Standing in the boat beneath, Stuart worked with the men; and as the planks thundered down, and the bridge steadily advanced, the voice of the general was heard humming a song.

He was singing carelessly, although at every instant an overpowering force of the enemy was looked for, and a heavy attack upon the bridge then and there expected.

At last the bridge was finished; the artillery crossed amid hurrahs from the men, and then Stuart slowly moved his cavalry across the shaky footway.

A little beyond was another arm of the river, which was, however, fordable; the water being just deep enough to swim a small horse; and through this, as through the interminable sloughs of the swamp beyond, the whole column moved.

The prisoners, who were numerous, had been marched over in advance of everything, and these were now mounted on mules, of which several hundred had been cut from the captured wagons and brought along.

They were started under an escort across the ford, and into the swamp beyond.

Here, mounted often two on a mule, they had a disagreeable time; the mules constantly falling in the treacherous mud-holes, and rolling their riders in the ooze.

When a third swamp appeared before them, the voice of the Yankees was exclaimed, with tremendous indignation:

"How many chicken-homies are there, I wonder, in this infernal country!"

The rear-guard, under Colonel Lee, had, meanwhile, moved steadily from the high ground, and defiled across the bridge.

The hoofs clattered on the hasty structure, the head of the column was turned toward the ford beyond, the last squadron had just passed, and the bridge was being destroyed when shots resounded on the opposite bank of the stream, and Burnham's cavalry, together with Colonel Rush and his farm-laborers, came thundering down to the bank.

They were exactly ten minutes too late!

Stuart was over with his artillery, and the swollen stream barred the way.

The Confederates had won the race.

The disappointed Federals banged away at Colonel Lee and his rear-guard, and a parting salute whizzed through the trees as the long gray column slowly disappeared.

CHAPTER XIV.

GREAT AND HIS CONFEDERATES.

Captain Fletcher Burnham was in his new quarters impatiently awaiting the arrival of some one.

There was a look of care, disappointment and annoyance on his brow.

At length there was the sound of hastily approaching footsteps without; and, too impatient to wait, he at once sprang to the entrance to receive his expected visitor.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, in a tone of relief, as the person drew near, "you have come at last, Grit! I am very glad to see you."

"Yes, captain, I am here," rejoined the scout, calmly; "I came as I received your message."

"Well," said Burnham, after a moment's pause, "was ever any one's plans so thoroughly upset as mine have been? From the moment that impudent raider started from the vicinity of Taylorsville, till he disappeared again, I have been in a state of confusion. I was on his track; and yet, what came of it? He has got off almost scot-free—actually lost, as I am informed, only one man, Latane, while I have lost nearly half a dozen from my own company. Grit, I cannot fairly submit to this defeat—this upsetting of all my plans. What is to be done?"

"But I don't know what his next move is to be, captain, and depend on some one else besides McClellan to give you assistance," answered the scout.

Major Burnham looked at the speaker inquiringly.

"Seriously, captain," the scout went on, "I don't know what to make of that man—McClellan. Had Hancock, or any of a dozen other generals, I could name, been in command of this magnificent army, Stuart never would have got back to the Confederate lines alive—ah! and for that matter, we would have been in possession of Richmond just eighteen days ago—that is, directly after the victory at Seven Pines."

"I believe you, Grit," said the captain; "but you know we mustn't say such things aloud."

"But I tell you, Captain Burnham, I am getting out of all manner of patience with the way this campaign is conducted, and I am not the only one."

"We must submit to the powers that be, for all that, Grit," said the officer; "and now tell me, how do you expect to find out what Lee's and Stuart's next moves will be?"

"I don't know of this," said Grit. "I shall go into their lines again."

"Alone?"

"No; if I can arrange the matter, I want to take a scout with me."

"Who are they?"

"Sid Newton, of the Chickahominy, and Charley Clayton and Tom Merret of Royal's company."

"That can be arranged. When do you wish to start?"

"Early this evening."

But Newton—he was wounded the other day—was not fit for an expedition."

"Yes, he seems to be pretty much all right, and is mighty anxious to start out with me, I can tell you."

"Well, I'll give you a line to Royal, or whoever is in command of his company. By the way, how is he getting along?"

"Very well, I hear."

"I'm glad to know it," then after some moment's pause, in writing—well, here's what will give you the two men you want."

And now, as I may not see you again before you start—good-by; and be sure to let me hear from you as soon as you have anything of importance to report."

"Certainly, captain—good-by," and the scout quietly withdrew.

Early that same evening, Grit and the three men for whom he had taken a strong liking, started out.

Thanks to the scout's consummate knowledge of the country, they penetrated the Confederate lines, scouted all through the country about Richmond, learned all they had undertaken to find out, met with innumerable adventures and many hair-breadth escapes, and at last at the end of ten days, started on their return toward the Union lines.

For some time they traveled on without incident. At length, while in the vicinity of the Little Bridge Road, they heard that a party of the enemy were then at the Chimneys, with their pickets in front, and that they were going to make an expedition toward the Goldings, where the Federals had a picket post.

They at once resolved to waylay the party, whatever its strength might be, their intention being to attack it from the woods on either side, thus to cut the party in confusion, to make their escape in the thicket, if necessary.

Grit was at the time in pretty good spirits

—hot for a fight—and he knew he could depend upon his companions, every one of them.

So they set out toward the Chimneys, and when within a mile or so of the rebel pickets on the other side, took post in the woods where the road suddenly descended between high banks, and gave them an excellent opportunity to ambush the graycoats as they approached.

They waited two or three hours, and still there was no sign of an enemy. Then, as midnight drew near, they concluded to give it up for the day, and go across to the home of a good Union man, with whom Grit was acquainted, and get supper and lodging.

They went accordingly, and had a good supper, to long their host to get ready a hot cup of coffee at daylight, when they would stop again.

Soon after daybreak they left him in high spirits, and made for the main road again.

They had just drawn near, in the field, when they saw the head of a squadron of Confederate cavalry, coming from the direction of the Goldings.

"We have found them in the night!"

At, or near Goldings, they had captured the Union pickets and some ten or twelve others beside.

They had passed them to a forest of big pines, through which they had passed the evening before; but this was impossible. The enemy were so close upon them that if they started to run they would be easily overtaken, and the pine forest was more than half a mile off.

The only thing they could think of was to take advantage of a rise in the ground, cross the road, and get in some pine bushes, short second growth, about as high as a man—where they determined to open fire upon them.

Accordingly, they ran across as hard as the could, and passing by a small house, got in the bushes. The enemy were coming on rapidly, and they held a hurried council of war.

"What do you say, Grit," asked Charley Clayton; "are we to let 'em have it? They're a pretty strong force, you know."

"Let me hear what the rest of you have to say," rejoined the scout. "What's your idea, Tom?"

"I tell you, 'ah, boys,'" exclaimed Tom, quickly, "it won't do for us to let them get by without doing them some damage. They have been up there robbing, plundering, and making prisoners of our men, and I for one, intend to fire into them."

"Ah! and what say you, Newton?"

"I'll settle this question," said Sid Newton, quietly.

"As how?" asked the scout, wonderfully.

"I recognized two men in the squadron."

"Who are they?" asked Grit, at once.

"The pale man with the beard, and the lieutenant and one of the men who helped to hang your brother, and I think there were others of the party."

"We stay here—at least I do," said the scout, hoarsely. "I shall fight, and die if necessary. But we can get off. They will think we are a heavy force sent to ambush them; and in the confusion we can get in and cut them off, where they never can catch us—trust me for that."

Tom Merret instantly declared that he would stand by Grit as long as he could hold out in the pines.

Newton said that had been his intention from the moment he recognized those who had taken part in the murder of Elmer Carroll.

Charley Clayton was not slow to add that he could be counted on every time—but they were all very pale—very pale and anxious.

Brave men never underestimate the danger they are about to encounter.

The most courageous man I ever knew trembled like an aspen leaf while marching up the hillside, and got so much that he would have been the last man in the regiment to even think of turning back.

Such is true courage.

CHAPTER XV.

A PLUCKY FIGHT, WITH A DISAGREEABLE ENDING.

Grit and his three brave comrades now looked carefully to their arms and saw that all was right.

Beside revolvers, they all had carbines, except Newton, who carried a short cut-throat knife, and got some of the cartridges up with the spermaceti on the cartridges.

He worked at it, and got it in order, however, and then said he was ready.

The cavalry had now got within twenty yards of them, and at the head of the column rode a colonel well known to Grit, who was surrounded by his staff officers. The prisoners were in the rear.

It was neither the colonel nor the prisoners Grit was looking out for; he had in mind a certain lieutenant, a villain by the name of Langford, as well as some half a dozen others.

At length his eyes sparkled—emitted fire, as it seemed to Newton—and raising his carbine, he cried, "I have found a mark to his liking, he exclaimed:

"Now, boys, let 'em have it!" and they fired a volley which at once threw the rebels into confusion.

The young lieutenant who had had charge of the execution of poor Elmer Carroll, and who, perhaps, was the most innocent of all who took part in that unholy business, dropped dead; a major, a captain, and a private also fell.

The rebels fairly trembled in their boots, and turned their horses to run—thinking they were attacked by the greater part of the Union army.

The colonel shouted, "Steady! steady, men!" and pushed forward. He was a brave fellow, but two of the little party were ready for him.

As he got within five yards of where they were they fired. The skirt of his coat was torn to pieces, his horse was killed, and he himself fell mortally wounded.

As he fell, some of the officers, whose horses had run on by to the front, came galloping back; and, seeing one in a particularly handsome uniform, with brand in the sleeves, Grit fired and shot him through the body, killing him.

They might easily have got off in the confusion now, had it not been for a woman who saw them when they were scudding across the road.

"Oh! they are only four men!" she cried, vindictively, at the top of her lungs.

The enemy, as soon as they heard this, rallied, and threw dismounted men into the bushes after their hidden foe; it seemed as if they were down and in the pines in less than a minute.

Sid Newton had been shot through the fleshy part of the left arm, and Charley Clayton had been slightly wounded in the side.

No time was to be lost, and they made a break for the big pine forest, where Grit expected to be able to escape.

They could not reach it—the flankers coming in and cutting them off—and soon they found that they were completely surrounded.

Grit separated from the rest, and was running about trying to find an opening to escape, but they were all around him. He could hear their angry howls as they closed in.

"Hi, y! here they are, boys! Bully for us! Give it to 'em! Give 'em blue brimstone and death!"

It was like a pack of famished wolves. Grit had discharged his carbine, and all the chambers of his revolver were empty.

He had stopped under a sapling to reload.

He felt at that moment as if he had never been so miserable in all his life before.

He had that feeling of desperation which can be imagined a dog has when it is run into a corner, and glares up and snaps at one.

His hand did not tremble a particle, however, as he was loading his revolver and carbine, and when this was done he got up from the ground.

Half a dozen of the enemy were closing right around him, and as soon as they saw him they fired, and he returned their fire.

He could not find an opening to get out. He was surrounded upon every side, and he did not know what to do.

Every minute he was blazing away at him, only a few yards off, as he doubled about, and he had nine balls through his clothes and the cap of his coat, and one in his cap.

At last he got into an open space, toward the road, and saw a gap in the fence which only one cavalryman was watching.

"Now's my chance," he thought. He made a rush, and was through at him.

He had kept one charge in his revolver, and if he killed the cavalryman, as he thought he easily might, he could get his horse, and ride off.

As he ran toward him the rebel trooper raised his carbine and fired at Grit, but the scout did not mind that. He was up to him in a minute, and putting his revolver

"It is well," said Grit, approvingly. "Next, dear Ellen, sweet sister, for you are as dear as a sister to me—try now, that Elmer is no more, to look with favor on Fenton Duntbar's suit, for I can assure you he is a genuine, noble-hearted young man, and he loves you well and truly."

"Please—please, Clinton, do not talk of love for another, now; I cannot bear it. My poor heart is almost broken."

"Yes—yes, I will try to think of it," murmured Grit. "I should hope to fully avenge poor Elmer's death. As it is, three of those who had a hand in the cowardly business I have sent to their final accounts; but the chief murderers still cumber the earth."

"Clinton," said Ellen, suddenly, "Fenton tells me you are all sure to be hung at daylight—now?"

"Ah! is that so? Does he know I am one of the three?"

"No; he doesn't even dream of such a thing."

"Tell him then; it may be he can do something for me; but, if the worst comes to the worst, when you see your cousin, Hilda Mason, say to her that my love was unaltered to the last, and my principles are—and that I did with her name upon my lips."

"Yes—yes, Clinton; I will tell her. Good—"

"Miss Wayne, your aunt— I hear Heaven—"

"Yes, Fenton, it is indeed so, and a pretty serious scrape I fear I have got into time, to make the best of it."

"Indeed you have, and I wish, from the bottom of my heart, you were well out of it; but I fear the worst. The officers and men of the regiment here are very bitter against you."

"So I suppose," said the scout, thoughtfully.

"Fenton," whispered Ellen, "can't you help them in some way?"

"I fear not," said the young lieutenant, slowly, "but you know your father expects us to-night. His regiment moves to-morrow, and he may not get another chance to see you for some time."

"I never could see you in the morning, we shall be in time to see my father, and then couldn't you get a chance to help Clinton and these poor fellows off in the night?"

"I fear not; and then, what excuse have we for remaining here?"

"Suppose I should suddenly be taken very ill," she suggested, slyly.

"Hilda," said the young officer, hastily, "for your sake, I'll think it. And now, dear Miss Wayne, come. I dare not remain here a moment longer—especially, if we are to assist them to escape. And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"And—"

"Give us a taste," said the sentinel, reaching out his hand; "it's mighty tough work standin' here, hour after hour, without a drop of comfort ter wet a fellow's whistle with."

"List so, comrade; take a hold an' take a right smart pull, too. I ain't no ole hog, I ain't."

The sentinel drew the stopper and placed the contents of the canteen in his hand.

"He did take 'a right smart pull,'" and when he surrendered the canteen to its owner, it was with a profound sigh of satisfaction.

"Here's to yer," said the Good Samaritan, placing the nozzle to his own lips; but, had it been lighter, or had the sentinel paid any attention, he might have noticed that his companion didn't swallow much.

"That," he exclaimed, taking a long breath, "thet's ther right sort. Ther 'ere come from ther Yanks, fur sartin. I got it myself, while I was with Stuart, on his grand raid. 'Take erther pull, comrade; 'twon't hurt yer fur a cent.'"

"Well, sein't it you, I don't mind if I do," and the worthy sentinel nearly pulled the bottom of the canteen out of his mouth.

Very little was now said for some time; both soldiers seemed to be reflecting on the great merits of the "blue ruin."

At length the sentinel remarked, somewhat drowsily, that "ther infernal stuff was all powerful!"—and then, leaning up against the door-jamb, he gave a profound sigh, and would have let his carbine fall had not the other caught it.

The next instant the overpowered sentinel was lying at his length upon the floor.

"Quick—quick!" whispered the knight of the canteen, and he got it in his hand.

"My advice to yer, don't make a breath o' noise. That's ther ticket. Now then, just yin dig out o' ther back door lively. Ye'll find three horses an' yer fixin's back o' ther barn behind ther stables. Ther horses has got ther hoofs shovled inter stockins made o' carpet an' sich like. An' now ez yer tarry, but git out o' this ez quick ez yer goin'—I'll let yer. An' just look a-ther. My advice to yer, don't you ever let no one git yerselves inter no sich er fix ez this yer again, 'cause I mayn't be 'round fur ter git yer out."

Three Union men, one after the other, grasped the good-natured fellow by the hand, and then silently departed.

They reached the back back of the barn. The horses were there, and the horses had got a portion of their arms and other property; and, very thankful for the thoughtful kindness of their friends, they quickly mounted and rode silently away.

Three days on the night of the twenty-fifth of June that Grit once more presented himself before his commanding officer, and afterward before McClellan.

The first mention of a great battle was imminent; that Stuart had reported his exposed situation toward the river; and that Lee and his generals had decided to take advantage of his carelessness or shortsightedness.

On hearing this report, such measures of defense were taken as the time permitted; and the expected attack was awaited—by McClellan, at least—with anxious apprehension.

It was about ten o'clock the next morning—the twenty-sixth—that the rebel forces issued in vast numbers from their camps behind the Potomac and commenced their bold and desperate assaults upon the Federal army.

The first demonstration was an attack on the cavalry, which was posted in the vicinity of Hanover Court House, on the extreme right. While this operation was progressing, they extended their assault to the troops stationed nearest to them, which were posted in the vicinity of Mechanicsville.

They crossed the Chickahominy at Meadowbridge, above the town, with the evident intention of turning the right wing of the Federal forces.

The troops placed here were the Eighth Illinois cavalry, more than half of the Bucktail Regiment, and five companies of the Pennsylvania Reserves. They were protected by rifle-pits and breast-works.

As soon as the assault of the evening began, their vast numbers, which appeared to them inexhaustible in front and around the Federal lines, clearly proved that an attempt at resistance by so small a corps would be wholly useless.

General Reynolds immediately dispatched a messenger to General McClellan for reinforcements.

During the interval which occurred before these could arrive, the Federals made a firm resistance, and the Bucktails maintained their position with such obstinacy that a large number of them were captured.

About two o'clock the engagement became more general and desperate.

While advancing down by the rear of Mechanicsville through low, swampy ground, the enemy were attacked by the Federal troops from the cover of their rifle-pits and earth-works with immense effect.

A scene of great carnage and tumult ensued. Many of the men and horses sunk in the mire, and became helpless targets for the Federal sharpshooters.

By this the action had spread along the line toward the left, and the troops of General Meade, who had been attacked, now engaged the enemy.

A vigorous contest then took place, which occupied the afternoon of the twenty-sixth.

In vain the Rebels, advancing repeatedly with great resolution, endeavored to drive the Federals from their position. The latter remained immovable.

At six o'clock, apparently before the Federals had time to wait of success, the Rebels brought fresh troops to bear upon the assault, and the battle perceptibly increased in fury.

At that period Merrell's division arrived opportunely on the field as a reinforcement.

The second brigade of this division was called into immediate action. It was ordered to relieve the center of General McClellan's column.

The Fourth Michigan, the Fourteenth New York, the Sixty-second Pennsylvania, and the Ninth Massachusetts, together with a battalion of Berdan's sharpshooters, were drawn up in line of battle.

The struggle which followed was well sustained and desperate on both sides. It continued without any advantage to either party till half past nine o'clock.

The loss of the enemy during this period must have been fearful, as they were confronted by the Federal troops, who were placed in a great measure by their rifle-pits and breast-works.

All their efforts to dislodge the latter proved fruitless.

Late in the day, they made a furious charge with cavalry. They were met by a squadron of Federal horse, under Burnham, and driven back, many of their horses sticking fast in the marsh, and being abandoned by their riders.

Here it was that Grit Carroll and Sid Newton did good service, both fighting like demons until the enemy had retired beyond rifle-shot.

"Three more of the murderers fallen before my carbine," muttered Grit, as he and Sid again joined their command, from which they had become separated.

There were now only six remain, Stuart himself, the cowardly Langford, and four others; and, if I live until this battle is over, some of those will not be alive."

"That fendish murder isn't proving to be a very paying investment to the Southern Confederacy," remarked Newton.

"I don't mean it shall," was the scout's concise reply.

Fitz-John Porter, who commanded the entire corps to which the division engaged on this day belonged, was present in every part of the field, and was ably assisted by McClellan, Merrell, and Griffin.

During the whole battle the artillery on both sides did immense execution. At some periods the firing shook the earth, and the rapidity of the discharges indicated a most furious combat.

At seven o'clock the enemy made a special effort to break the center of the Federal troops engaged. The effort was repulsed and defeated with great gallantry by General Griffin.

The troops on the left, under Seymour and Reynolds, also fought with much heroism, and succeeded in driving the ranks of the rebels to cross the bridge over the Chickahominy.

Thus, when the close of the first day's fight arrived, the enemy had really gained nothing and had lost heavily. But they were not disheartened.

They had only made a beginning of the gigantic enterprise which they had conceived, and they resolved in its prosecution to a successful issue.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BATTLE OF GAINES' MILL.

During the night which ensued, after the

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BATTLE OF MECHANICSVILLE.

Night came.

Night had seen no more of either Fenton Duntbar or Ellen Wayne; but, as they were certain that they had not left the house, he felt sure they were still firm in their determination to help him and his comrades.

By this advice, therefore, Sid and Tom had everything ready for instant departure the moment the time should come, and having disposed of the scanty supper that had been prepared, they set themselves to wait for some propitious sign.

At eleven o'clock all was still in the house, not a sound was heard save, now and then, the humming of a tune by the sentinel, as he stood in the doorway.

The man outside could be dimly seen leaning against the picket fence; but, as there was no light in the room, he could not see the others.

Presently, somewhat to Grit's surprise, a soldier came staggering through the hallway, with a canteen in his hand.

"Here!" exclaimed the sentinel, gruffly, "where are you going?"

"Dunno," was the concise reply.

"What have you got there?" was the next question.

"Little ole blue ruin—that's all," responded the seemingly happy warrior.

battle at Mechanicsville, orders were given to commence the removal of the camp equipage, the stores, and the ammunition of the Federal army toward the James River.

Soon long trains of wagons, several thousand in number, began their slow line of march, extending four miles in the direction indicated.

The sick and wounded were also conveyed, some toward the White House, some toward Harrison's Landing. General Porter had been ordered to withdraw his forces from their recent position near the river.

While these movements were progressing in the Federal camp, the rebels were not idle.

Intense reinforcements were promptly brought forward.

The early dawn of the next day, the twenty-seventh of June, beheld sixty thousand rebels under arms, ready to renew the assault.

The Federals had gained some slight repose during the night, and though wearied, and about to be assailed by superior numbers, were undaunted by the impending onset of the sixty thousand.

General Porter had received orders to fall back to a position two miles beyond Gaines' Mills. In obeying this order, General Sykes' division led the retreating column. Next came the divisions of General Marshall.

During the march perfect order was maintained, but the enemy mistaking the movement for a hasty flight, pressed forward in enormous masses, overtook the Federals as they neared Gaines' Mills, and there resumed the assault upon them.

Their advance had been temporarily impeded by the destruction of the bridge at Millersburg. But soon they constructed a temporary causeway, and General Porter's army was conveyed over, and the pursuit of the Federals was renewed.

As their retreat was made at an unhurried and leisurely pace, it was not long before they were overtaken by the enemy.

Then ensued the bloody actions of Gaines' Mill.

The scene of this conflict was an extensive area, about two miles in length, and one mile wide. The country was made up of green meadows, waving grain fields, thick woods, boggy marshes, and rude ravines. Several farmhouses existed within its limits, which were afterward used as hospitals.

General Porter had been ordered to engage the advancing foe, if he were attacked in this position. Accordingly at eleven o'clock all was ready to receive them; each division, each brigade, each regiment, and each gun had then been placed in its proper position.

Along the far-extending lines at proper intervals the immortal banners of the republic appeared in view, waving majestically in the breeze, and bidding defiance to the approaching host.

Bright guns in endless succession flashed in the morning light. The long ranks of Federal troops presented a firm and dauntless front. General with their staffs were seen riding rapidly from regiment to regiment, giving orders and perfecting their positions.

After a short interval of silence and expectation, the sudden roar of the enemy's artillery, and the falling and bursting of their shells gave evidence that they had recommenced the contest.

The first firing came from the woods and across the roads on the right. The Federal cannon instantly answered in reply at the still invisible enemy.

At length, after a considerable period of time had been expended in this manner, the Federal ranks merged from the woods, and the battle lines, and the engagement became general.

It was fiercely contested on both sides.

Several desperate attempts were made by the enemy to break through the Federal lines on the right and on the left; but they were met in every instance with the unflinching firmness of veterans, and were invariably repulsed with heavy losses to the assailants.

The battle continued to rage during the whole day, with the usual vicissitudes which characterize engagements in which brave men contend for the mastery with equal degrees of resolution and obstinacy. As evening approached, the energy of the attack of the rebels diminished, and a sudden lull occurred, but after a short respite the contest was renewed by them with greater fury than before.

It then became evident that during this

mysterious interval the enemy had been largely reinforced.

Their troops now rushed forward in overwhelming masses with savage and frantic yells.

With answering shouts the two armies approached each other, and dealt their death blows upon their opposing ranks with incessant fury.

The combat now became most desperate and sanguinary.

The Federals performed many deeds of the noblest daring and fortitude, but soon the energy of the attack subsided, and portions of the Confederate column, which demonstrated that they had the advantage not merely of a preponderance of numbers, but also of physical freshness.

The Irish regiments, at the critical moment the Federals received some reinforcement from the other side of the Chickahominy. They consisted of three brigades, with some cavalry, a good part of which Irish.

The Irish regiments, as was their usual custom, went into the fight with their coats off, and their sleeves rolled up, and fought the exultant rebels with the fury and ferocity of the wild.

Hundreds of Confederates then bit the dust, laid low forever by the stalwart blows of the gallant and pugnacious sons of Erin.

The carnage was still progressing all over the widespread field, when the sun disappeared in the western heavens, and the shadows of night were about to descend upon the tumultuous and sanguinary scene.

The enemy had repeatedly endeavored to force the Federals to the low, marshy tract lying between Gaines' Mill and the bridge.

To have been driven into that perilous position would have insured the destruction of a large number of troops, for the impassable ground, and would have proved the weltering grave of thousands.

At one time the rebels had nearly succeeded in this underfaking.

It was when the danger here was most imminent, that the wild rush and determined assault of the Irish regiments saved that portion of the army from destruction. During the progress of the assault several partial panics had occurred, and some rapid and frantic running to the rear had been achieved by frightened fragments of the Federal forces. But the vast majority of them fought nobly and well.

About twenty-seven thousand Union troops took part in this battle.

In addition to those composing the corps of General Porter, the divisions of Generals Hooker, Kearney and Sumner were also engaged.

The number of Confederates who figured in the contest was at least sixty thousand; and the greater portion of these were fresh troops, who were substituted from time to time for those who had become wearied during the progress of the struggle.

Notwithstanding this disparity of numbers, at the close of the day the Federals emerged from their position.

The main body of the troops were still in their first lines near Gaines' Mill. The Federal troops on both sides were very heavy. Many valuable Federal officers were slain. The field was covered in many places with heaps of dead and dying.

The plaintive groans of the wounded, after the roar of the contest ceased, burdened the midnight air, and added to the horrors of the fearful scene.

The combatants on both sides slept upon their arms, except those who were detailed to guard the dead, and to bury the wounded from the field, and to perform their duty.

While these operations were progressing on the right wing of the Federal army, an engagement took place on the left, where General Smith's position, consisting of breastworks and two redoubts.

He was attacked on Friday evening at seven o'clock, by the Georgia brigade, commanded by General Toombs. The latter was encountered by Hancock's brigade, the guns in the redoubts assisting in the engagement, which was brief but desperate.

After losing a hundred killed, whom they had slain, the Georgians retired in disorder before the deadly and continuous fire of the Federal troops.

This was the first battle at Golding's Farm. The second ensued on the following morning.

Mortified at their defeat, the chivalrous Georgians determined to renew the contest.

At eight o'clock they again advanced toward the redoubts, and resumed the attack.

The Federal troops were either protected by the breastworks, or were concealed by

lying on the grass. They gave the Georgians a deadly reception.

Colonel Lamar was mortally wounded in the commencement of the engagement, and his lieutenant-colonel was taken prisoner. The result of the contest was the same as before, the rebels being compelled to retire, after suffering very severe losses.

That same night, as Grit (Carroll and his three friends, Sid Newton, Charley Clayton and Tom Merrett, who, through the influence of Fletcher Burnham, were benighted themselves upon the ground for a few hours' rest, the following brief conversation occurred:

"Well, Grit, old boy," said Charley Clayton; "you've done some pretty hard service to-day, and that piece of yours has rung out a great many times. What is the grand score?"

"I only keep one score," answered Grit; "and I don't have to cut notches to remember how that foots up."

"You've added something to the sum total of it to-day," said Newton, confidently.

"Yes," was the reply, "two more of the miserable cowards are dead, and I've marked another for life—he the same long or short."

"Did you get a shot at Stuart?"

"Yes; fired at him ten times; but never touched him once. He was not in the regular line, you know; but I knew where to find him."

"And Langford?"

"'Twas he I marked, and if he ain't the most frightened and most uncomfortable man in the whole Confederate army to-night, why, I'm greatly mistaken. I put one bullet through his left ear, another plowed a furrow across his forehead, leaving the marks to show for ever; and a third carried away a portion of his upper lip."

"You did give him a close call," exclaimed Newton.

"I should say so!" added Tom.

"Ay, but the blow will be close enough," said Grit, calmly; "and, now, let us go to sleep; there's work for us on the morrow."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RETREAT.

During the night after the battle, the removal of the baggage trains, of the sick, and the march toward the James River and the White House was completed.

The enemy had thus far gained but little advantage, and had been very severely punished.

Still, however, deluded by the absurd and fantastic conceit that the retrograde movement of the Federal army was a mere flight before their invincible forces, they were determined to continue the contest.

On the afternoon of the twenty-seventh, the headquarters of General McClellan were removed across the Chickahominy to the vicinity of Savage Station.

Thirty vast masses of stores and ammunition had been piled up, and they were taken to their new depot on James River.

Throughout this whole route the houses were converted into hospitals, and were occupied by the wounded of the Federal army.

During Friday night the larger portion of the Union forces crossed the Chickahominy, and thus obtained some advantage over the pursuing enemy.

It should be observed at this time, that the battle of Mechanicsville and Gaines' Mill took place on the left side of that stream. Those who afterward ensued were fought on the right side.

This arrangement will be understood, when it is remembered that the Chickahominy flows southward into the James River; that, in descending the current, the fact that the observer is supposed to be facing the mouth of the stream, and that the points of the compass are to be taken accordingly.

Notwithstanding the enormous losses which both sides had sustained, and although they had not as yet given the opponents from a single one of their chosen positions, they persisted in claiming continual victories.

Under this pleasing delusion, they prepared, after the interval of a day, to renew the contest, and to endure additional and still more sanguinary slaughter, in the pursuit of a false and chimerical object.

No attack was made on the main body of the Federal army on Saturday, the twenty-eighth of June.

Early in the morning of that day the entire force which had so valiantly confronted

the rebel hosts had crossed the Chickahominy by four bridges.

These were then blown up or burned, to intercept the pursuit of the enemy.

Later in the day it was ascertained that they had crossed the stream at Newbridge, with the apparent intention of moving round toward Bottom Bridge, to cut off the communication between the Federals with their rear and telegraph.

Saturday were away without any heavy engagement on the part of the rebels.

The reason of this apparent inactivity was that a large number of the Federals were busily engaged in burying their dead, and in conveying their wounded from the scenes of the late sanguinary engagements into Richmond.

Many of the wounded Federal soldiers also fell into their hands.

During this day the Union army was withdrawn as far as Savage's Station.

From this point, several separate trains of cars, filled with the wounded, were sent down to White House. A third trip was about to be made when it was ascertained that the enemy had cut the telegraph wires, and had gained possession of Despatch Station.

A large proportion of the sick and wounded, who were at Savage Station, were on this same train. Plans were made for their removal to Harrison's Landing was commenced. But a sufficient number of these conveyances were not to be obtained; and except those who were able to crawl, were to crawl toward a place of safety, the remainder ultimately fell into the hands of the enemy.

During Saturday night a vast amount of commissary stores, ammunition and hospital supplies, for which there were no means of removal at command, were destroyed by order of General McClellan.

The late-arrived ammunition, which had arrived from the White House during the previous week, were replaced in the cars, and the entire train, headed by an engine, was to be sent on the railroad, and run into the Chickahominy at the bridge, which had been burned, to prevent it from falling into the possession of the rebels. This train rushed forward on its pathway to the rear, with fearful velocity, and at length plunged into the tranquil stream with a prodigious crash.

Strange spectacles were exhibited by the multitude of wounded and by the long lines of ambulances and wagons which, during the day, were toiling on their way toward James River.

Hundreds of men went limping along, some on crutches, and some on their own feet. The ambulances were all filled, and often the wounded would be seen sitting in the end of the wagons, their broken limbs and bodies bleeding, which out, blood dripping from them upon the ground beneath.

The heavy siege guns formed a conspicuous part of this singular and melancholy scene. These, together with droves of cattle, crowds of negroes, teamsters, sutlers, and frightened fugitives of every kind, together with the noise and tumult, the confusion and confusion, which were everywhere, attended such a throng at such a time, presented a most extraordinary combination of contrasts.

Sometimes a sudden terror pervaded the masses, for a report had arrived that the enemy were interposing a powerful column between them and the James River, thereby cutting off their only means of escape. Then again men would be reassured, when it was ascertained by the return of messengers who had been sent to the front, hope would revive, and a gay and lively tone would animate the volatile and mobile assembly.

While orders had been sent to White House to hasten the departure of the Federal troops from that station. These orders were obeyed with all possible dispatch, and the men were finally abandoned to the assembled transports and steamers at four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, the twenty-eighth. All the stores, ammunition and wounded had, as previously embarked, safely removed.

About seven o'clock in the evening the pickets of the enemy began to make their appearance in the vicinity, but they found only deserted and solitary places. Even the insignificant building, which had given a name and some celebrity to this locality, had been burned, although the author of the superfluous and barbarous deed remained unknown.

At three o'clock on Sunday morning, the twenty-ninth, General McClellan, attended

by his staff and body-guard, left the scene of his night's repose, and rode forward toward Charles City. He had directed his generals to abandon their intrenchments, to follow with their several divisions until intercepted by the enemy, and then to give them battle.

At daylight on Sunday morning General Sumner retired. Generals Sumner, Heintzelman, Keys, and Franklin soon followed with their respective forces. Then came McCall's division, and last of all those of Hooker and Kearney, who brought up the rear.

As soon as the rebel commanders observed that the Federal army was again in motion, they commenced to close in upon them; but it was not till later in the day that a regular engagement took place between them.

Then ensued the battle of Peach Orchard.

CHAPTER XX.

PEACH ORCHARD AND WHITE OAK SWAMP.

The enemy approached the Federal troops by the Williamsburg Road, and had reached a point within a hundred yards of the Federals, when the latter opened upon them with their powerful guns.

The effect of the discharge upon the close columns of the enemy was terrific. The ranks swayed and staggered like drunken men before the continuous hail-storm of shot and shell which was poured upon them.

The battle lasted from eight in the morning until noon.

During this period the rebels endeavored to outflank the Federals on the left, and intercepted them on the Williamsburg Road, but without effect.

They charged several times on three brigades, with the evident intention of crushing them in detail, but with no better success.

All the troops engaged fought with desperate valor.

The efforts made by the rebels to drive the Federals to a retreat, from their position, were utterly failures; and it was not until the Union generals had become assured that the caravan of wagons, ambulances, and cattle of their army had crossed the White House bridge, were safe from the immediate pursuit of the enemy, that they gave the order to fall back.

This order was executed leisurely; and having retired to Savage Station, they again drew up in line of battle to receive the advancing foe.

The contest which ensued was still more fierce and sanguinary.

It commenced about five o'clock in the afternoon, and did not terminate until eleven o'clock at night.

Before the attack began, the rebels had been severely reinforced; their next assault therefore was much more vigorous and destructive.

They approached through a dense wood, which concealed them from view until they were within a short distance of the Federal lines. They then suddenly emerged from the edge of the forest, ran out three or four batteries to commanding positions, and opened a heavy fire of shot and shell.

This salutation they kept up with such skill and resolution, that a portion of the Federals were overpowered and gave way. A Pennsylvania regiment broke, and the very cad in panic after losing a hundred men in killed and wounded.

The Federal artillery could not for a time be served, all the men being either picked off or hurled away from their guns.

Never had the rebels fought with more desperate courage.

During the progress of the battle the Federal forces were on several occasions, in a very critical position.

At one time an entire brigade of the enemy was observed to be moving stealthily down to the right, with the design of making an attack upon the flank.

This intention was defeated by the promptitude with which Captain Pettit placed a battery in such a position as to sweep the flank of the enemy with grape and shell, which eventually compelled them to recoil, and to relinquish their purpose.

During the progress of the fight the Irish brigades greatly distinguished themselves, charging the enemy's lines up to the very end of the enemy. One of the rebel batteries they hauled off, spiked the guns, demolished the carriages, and then abandoned them.

At length the shades of darkness descended upon this mortal combat, but they brought no termination to its horrors. The

roar of the cannon, and the sharper, shriller sound of the musketry continued to be deafening and incessant.

The night was made as light as noonday at rapid intervals by the lurid flashes of the artillery, and each discharge enabled the combatants to ascertain the position of their foes with more distinctness than the day.

To add to the terrors of the scene, the adjacent woods were set on fire by the bursting shells, and soon the conflagration rolled vast heaving volumes of smoke and flame far up into the sky, and the appearance of the battlefield the appearance of a pandemonium.

Thus the carnage and the contest raged until nearly dawn.

The losses on both sides were very heavy. The rebels had done much damage by firing into the hospitals in which many of the wounded had been placed; and they perpetrated this barbarity in spite of the significant white and red flags which were placed upon them.

At twelve o'clock (the Federal commanders received word from General McClellan) to fall back rapidly from Savage Station across White Oak Swamp, inasmuch as the rebels were endeavoring to intercept them.

A desperate race ensued to determine who should first gain possession of the swamp.

The Federals were compelled to leave all their wounded at Savage Station in the hands of the enemy.

And now the movement toward the James River, which had begun in a leisurely and voluntary march thither, unavoidably degenerated into a flight on the part of the Federals, and into a pursuit on the part of the enemy.

The Federal soldiers knew this fact, and the resolution, not of hope, but of despair, now actuated them.

That was now overworked, but heroic land, who had engaged the enemy so often and so bravely, were compelled to exhaust the last powers of human endurance in order to escape complete destruction.

The race to reach from swamp was one of desperate energy, accompanied by desperate fighting; for the superiority of numbers, which the rebels possessed, enabled them to keep up a constant fire upon the rear of the Union army, while their main body strained every nerve to overreach and intercept the front.

The divisions of Heintzelman, Sumner, and Franklin were compelled to keep continually in the rear of the main body, during this part of the retreat, in order to beat off the hordes of the enemy, as from time to time they renewed the assault.

At length, about midnight, the cannon plashed through the waters of White Oak Creek.

It was eight o'clock on Monday morning of the thirtieth of June, and the day was bright and hot. The fugitives were exhausted with their superhuman efforts in fighting and retreating.

After crossing the creek, hundreds threw themselves upon the ground to rest, or crawling to the green margin of the limpid stream, leaned over, and drank to slake the burning thirst which consumed them.

Only a very brief period for repose, however, was allowed.

They had indeed won the race to White Oak Swamp; but the vast army of the rebels was in eager pursuit of them, and in a short time came upon the rear.

Then followed another desperate engagement, named after the locality in which it took place.

Soon after crossing White Oak Creek, the Federal generals formed their new line of battle with great energy and promptness.

The new position of the Union forces extended about four miles in length.

On the extreme right General Hancock was posted with his brigade. Next to him were placed the troops of Brooks and Davidson. The batteries, belonging to this division were commanded by Col. and A. J. S. and among the divisions of Sumner, Heintzelman and Porter.

The battle commenced with an attack by the enemy on the column of General Hancock.

They opened with about twenty batteries, which were served with such vigor and skill that they soon blew up several of Captain Mott's companies, and the result was a spread confusion among the teamsters, cannoners and troops who came within their range.

It was at this period that so complete a terror pervaded some of the regiments that one of them—the Twentieth New York—fled in the utmost disorder, and scattered in fragments in every direction. For this dis-

graceful proceeding General McClellan, on the following day, ordered the provost-marshal to arrest all the stragglers as they came into camp.

After a short time, however, the Federals who had been attacked, recovered their self-possession, and their guns responded to those of the enemy.

After dark had not yet crossed White Oak Creek, and the engagement was still confined to the operations of the artillery.

At length a portion of the rebels made an attempt to cross the stream, but were met and repulsed with success by General Smith, whose brisk fire of infantry extended continuously along the whole column.

Finding it impossible to cross in front, the enemy detached a powerful force to proceed four miles due south to Charley's Cross-roads, for the purpose of interposing between the Federal forces and James River, thereby intercepting their retreat.

The position which they proposed to reach was within a mile and a half of Turkey Bend on that river; and, had they succeeded in their intention, they would have inevitably accomplished the ruin of the army. The enemy effected a successful establishment at Harrison's Landing.

Fortunately, information of this movement of the rebels was obtained in time, and a portion of the wearied Union troops was so marshaled as to prevent its achievement.

They reached the advancing columns of the enemy at four o'clock in the afternoon, and attacked them.

The rebels fought desperately, and their artillery produced a dreadful havoc in the Federal ranks.

The latter were nearly dead already from the effects of heat, exhaustion and thirst, and so little discipline remained that a portion of those regiments which were nearest the James River at one time broke ranks, rushed to its shores, plunged in, and, after slaying their thirst, returned to their colors, and resumed the fight.

The resistance of the Federal troops gradually became weaker. Human nature could endure no more.

Fresh columns of the exultant rebels continued to press forward with still greater resolution. An overwhelming and decisive victory seemed about to crown their persevering efforts when, at the critical moment, a storm suddenly appeared.

As at Pittsburg Landing, so in the present instance, the gallant navy of the Union rescued the land forces from destruction.

The very signal the gunboats on the James River opened their fire upon the enemy.

At five o'clock the enormous rifled guns of three gunboats, which were anchored in Turkey Bend, began to hurl their colossal shells, with a detonation which completely drowned the feeble chorus of all the artillery on land, and terrified the foe by the unexpected presence of a more formidable antagonist.

As the shells descended upon the serried masses of the rebels, and burst among them, whole ranks were battered to the earth by the flying fragments.

Her whole line was covered.

Confusion and terror were quickly diffused through their columns, and they who, a few moments before, were confident of driving the Federal army into the James River, or of compelling them to surrender, themselves began to give way.

CHAPTER XXI.

BATTLE OF MALVERN HILL.

Encouraged by the evident effect of the shot of the gunboats, the Federal commanders, of whom the most distinguished on this memorable field was General Heintzelman, determined to recover the fortunes of the day by making a combined and desperate charge.

The gunboats were, therefore, signaled to suspend their fire.

Preparations were quickly made to effect their intended retreat.

The great-hearted veteran whom we have just named galloped from column to column.

He announced the purpose to charge in brief and thrilling words.

He then returned to his position, and passed down, to the right and to the left, the stern order of advance.

The bugles sounded, and, like the surging of a mighty deluge, which has long been compressed within narrow limits, that mass of heroes, having caught new energy and

strength from reviving hope, moved forward sublimely to the assault.

They marched defiantly against the foe, with the determination to conquer or to perish.

The enemy met the rushing tide at first with firmness; but nothing could long resist such a delirium of fortitude as seemed to have seized the Federal ranks.

They gradually gave way; their lines broke, and, eventually, they fled from the field in complete confusion.

A furious and famous battle-shock many were slain on both sides, and many prisoners were taken.

In the entire engagement the Federals lost, in killed and wounded, not less than three thousand men, besides the loss of the enemy was undoubtedly as great, if not greater.

The costliest saved the Federal army from ruin or from capitulation, and covered both the generals who commanded, and the soldiers who fought in it, with enduring renown.

In vain had the best rebel officers repeatedly tried in practice their favorite tactics of harassing the troops on the Federal lines, first on one wing, then on the other, and suddenly in the center.

All was in vain.

The ground had been safely reached.

The glancing plaid waters of the James River had at last greeted the longing eyes of the soldiers of the Union, and the possibility of their destruction or of a still more disastrous catastrophe forever averted.

At the close of the battle of White Oak Swamp the Federal army took possession of Malvern Hill in the vicinity of the river. General McClellan had selected Harrison's Landing as the place for the Federal permanent camp, and thither the convey of wagons, ammunition stores, and supplies of all sorts continued to be directed.

The James River was crowded with transports of all kinds, to assist in the work of transportation.

During Monday night the heroes of a seven days' battle rested from their herculean labors. But the task could not be completed. On Tuesday, the first of July, the end of this memorable series of engagements—the battle of Malvern Hill—was fought.

As an attack from the enemy was anticipated, the Federal army was drawn out in battle array at an early hour.

Their lines formed a magnificent semicircle, which presented a formidable front.

General Kew, with his command, was posted on the extreme right. General Franklin's corps came next; then the troops of Sumner, comprising two divisions. The extreme left was occupied by Porter. General Meagher, with his division, and Porter of Hooker, Kearny, and Couch, occupied the center.

Fifty heavy guns bristled along the lines from their freshly made earthworks.

The battle commenced about noon with a vigorous cannonading on both sides.

The Confederates were commanded by Generals Lee, Magruder, and Jackson, and General Lee, with great spirit.

Several hours passed before the infantry came into action.

At four o'clock the rebels advanced, fiercely attacked the troops commanded by General Couch, and attempted to break the Federal lines.

The effort failed, and the assaults were driven back with great slaughter at the point of the bayonet.

They were really disheartened.

After a short interval they made a still more desperate effort to accomplish their purpose.

The rebel commanders threw forward head on the ranks of troops, assisted and protected by artillery, against the ranks of Porter and Couch, and continued for more than an hour to hurl forward fresh columns upon the crisis line.

At one crisis their determined efforts seemed about to be successful in driving back the Federals; but at that critical moment Porter dispatched a messenger to Sumner.

The Irish brigadier of Meagher was immediately sent to him.

They advanced to meet the enemy with their usual enthusiasm.

The Federal lines were quickly steadied; the rebel host in turn recoiled, and the periled fortunes of the day were recovered.

The night was continued until after midnight.

At ten o'clock the last gun was fired.

During the progress of the engagement the most signal service had been rendered by the gunboats on James River.

The immense shells which their rifled cannon tore shrieking and howling through the forests, and often exploded within the lines of the enemy with a concussion which shook the solid earth, and scattered piles of dead and wounded men every way.

In all their efforts to drive the Federal forces from their position the enemy had signally failed.

After the repulse to which they had been repulsed with heavy losses.

The battle was to them an unqualified defeat.

So ended the engagement at Malvern Hill.

Thus terminated the last assault made by the troops of the Confederacy at this period upon the Union army in the peninsula. Thus concluded one of the most extraordinary series of battles which has ever occurred in the blood-stained annals of ancient or modern warfare.

The repose of the Federal army at Harrison's Landing now remained undisturbed for more than a month, until the second battle of Malvern Hill occurred, in which General Joe Hooker punished the enemy and gained possession of the field.

A little later the peninsula was abandoned, and the rebels resumed occupation.

It had now become evident to the Federal government that the expedition against Richmond, through the peninsula, had proved a total and irretrievable failure.

It was quite as evident that the longer delay of the army of the Union in that unpropitious clime would be productive of no good, while it would entail a continued and irreparable loss of the national treasure and of valuable lives.

General McClellan, therefore, received orders to evacuate Harrison's Landing.

This order was obeyed on the sixteenth and seventeenth of August, 1862.

The future destination of the army was then unknown.

It was, however, intended to be consolidated at a place which had been placed under the orders of General Pope.

This arrangement was afterward completed; and the fortunes of war were again tried under new auspices against the desperate, yet by no means contemptible enemy.

CHAPTER XXII.

EILEEN WAYNE.

Meanwhile, that is to say, during the latter part of the month of July, it was deemed requisite that the army commanded by General Pope, then in the vicinity of Culpeper, should be somewhat strengthened, and particularly in the department of cavalry, and so, several squadrons, heretofore attached to the Army of the Potomac—including Burnham's and Ingold's commands—were sent to him.

Grant Carroll, then, with his two inseparable companions, was now in the country between the Rapidan and the Rappahannock.

Fate had so connected that other important personage with the career of the "relics" of history, that he also was in that vicinity.

Stonewall Jackson had returned from the neighborhood of Richmond, and accompanying him were a portion of Stuart's cavalry, including the commander in which, Captain Dunbar was a lieutenant, and Loren Langford a minor officer.

The regiment commanded by Colonel Wayne also formed a part of his column.

Within the Confederacy, near the banks of the Rapidan, was the magnificent mansion and estate known as Glenwood, and which was owned and occupied by the widow of the late Senator Mason, and her peerless daughter, Eileen, of whom Colonel Wayne was guardian.

This hospitable mansion was now the center of unusual life and gaiety; for not only did it shelter the attractive widow and her accomplished daughter, but Eileen and Wayne were there, chaperoned, as usual, by her maiden aunt, Lydia.

Hence, as a matter of course, it was the Mecca to which the Confederate officers, who, by any possible means, could obtain an introduction, resorted.

The lovely Eileen had played her part well that night at the Chimneys, and had situated herself so perfectly in her aunt had become terribly alarmed, inasmuch, that she had insisted upon giving her a dose of not only very powerful, but very disagreeable medicine, and then had placed her in a place where she devoted Eileen was glad enough to retreat to. For, no sooner had she

"How would to-morrow night do?" asked Blyer.

"Make it the next night," said Langford "by that time I shall have the rhino ready." "Very good; we'll be ready then. By the way, you'll hear us company?"

"Of course."

"Then, everything's settled."

"Yes; and, now, I'll return to my quarters. Where's that guide?"

"Over yonder, waiting for you."

"Oh, yes; I see; and, now, good-night!"

"Good-night."

The two consummate villains parted.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ABDUCTION.

Two days passed. The second night came. There had been quite a gathering of gray-coated officers in Mrs. Mason's drawing-room, but now nearly all were gone—in fact, but two remained, Colonel Wayne, Ellen's father, and her would-be lover, Lieutenant Fenton Dunbar.

All had retired to a cozy little apartment, designated by Mrs. Mason as the snuggery, and Colonel Wayne had just finished a glass of old wine, which, as he said, he had taken to fortify himself for the road.

There had been a moment of silence, which the colonel now broke.

"Come, Fenton, my boy," he exclaimed, suddenly starting to his feet, "if you're quite through ogling that trio of pretty girls, we had better go."

"Oh, papa!" cried Ellen, "why do you leave us so soon? It's but little past eleven; I'm sure you might stay another hour. Remember, you didn't come near us at all last night."

"Only a little past eleven, eh?" laughed her father, as he took out his watch. "Now, this pretty little truth-teller says it's two minutes to twelve, and, I shouldn't wonder if you heard the clock strike in even less time than that. In fact, I shouldn't wonder— Eh? What the deuce was that, Fenton?"

Captain Dunbar was already on his feet.

"It was a shot sir," he said; "and, of course, comes from an enemy."

With flushed cheeks he sprang to the window.

"What making a great effort to appear calm, "we are being surrounded. We've got to fight for it or be taken prisoners; now, which shall it be?"

"How many are there? Let me see," and the colonel cautiously peered forth from the window.

"Ten—twelve—thirteen," he muttered, "on this side, and I suppose as many more on each of the others—say fifty in all, and only us two and a few niggers to oppose them. Hum! the thing looks blue enough—it does, for a fact."

"Rather," exclaimed Blyer, "I'm for fighting them, sir—and that to the death," and then, in a low whisper, he added: "Think what may be the fate of these sweet girls, if those outside gain possession here."

"Right, by Jove!" cried the colonel, "Let us close and fasten every door and window, and defend the place as long as we can stand. Quick! quick!—or it will be too late."

Alas! it was already too late. The assailants were, even then, forcing their way into the house.

"Crack!—crack!"

Down went a negro servant, and a bullet lodged in the wall, after passing through a picture, just above the colonel's head.

"Crack!—crack!"

Another servant fell, and a beautiful vase on a stand by Mrs. Mason's side was shattered to fragments.

"At least, a dozen of the enemy were now in the adjoining room."

"Punder and blazes!" suddenly exclaimed the colonel, "these are not Yankees—they are our own people!"

Ah! I understand now," said Fenton Dunbar, bitterly, "they are our own people, but ten times more to be feared than the worst Yankees that ever crossed the Potomac. They are Blyer's guerrillas, and—

—yes! I thought so; there's Sergeant Langford of the Carolina company, cutting his back on them. They have come at his bidding, and in his pay."

"Now, then!" cried Blyer, at this moment, at the same time forcing his way into the room, with a dozen men at his back.

"Now, then, I say, surrender—the whole kit of you. There's no use of your holding out for nothing more. There's only two men

among you—while we number more than fifty. Come, we've no time to spend in fooling. Turn around, and go to this place, and we want to get through and dig out before daylight."

"No, sir! Never will we surrender to such a you," cried Colonel Wayne, leveling a revolver at the guerrilla chief's head.

"Crack!"

But Blyer had sprang to one side just in time to save his worthless life, and the bullet penetrated the brain of the man directly behind him, who fell heavily to the floor.

With a bowl of rage the guerrillas sprang upon the two Confederate officers, and in less than a minute there were at least twenty of them in the room.

Still, for a time they fought well and desperately, each killing two men, and wounding no less than eight between them.

But the odds were too great, and at length Colonel Wayne fell heavily to the floor, and Dunbar was knocked senseless with the butt of a carbine.

This ended the fight.

Five minutes later all in and about the house had been secured.

"How many prisoners are there in all?" asked Blyer of his lieutenant.

"The two officers and five white women, and over'n'twenty niggers—half on 'em wenchers," was the reply.

"Hun, that's more than we can accommodate yonder, ain't it, lieutenant?"

"Yes, cap'n, a durned sight."

"Well, then, we'll chuck the niggers as we've no use for, and blow 'em to kingdom-come—dead men tell no tales; and this night's work mustn't get to Stonewall Jackson's ears, that's certain."

As it might be as it must seem, this cruel order was carried out, eleven negroes being shot dead in front of the mansion.

The house was then—to borrow the elegant term used by the guerrilla chief—thoroughly gutted, and the prisoners were securely bound, and the party at once retreated to the mountain fastness.

The night of terror wore away.

The morning dawned.

The morning of day rose higher and still higher in the heavens, and cast his golden rays upon what had been beautiful, hospitable Glenwood; but now, alas! how changed!

Fences torn down, the negro quarters—to make sure that not one of those who might otherwise carry the dreadful news to Jackson escaped—burned and lying a heap of ruins, the gardens trampled over, the house dismantled and plundered, and before the open door and gaping windows a heap of murdered blacks piled up, while still another lies stretched across the threshold.

And, in the place where men went with joyous song, and the walls of the house "fairly shook with laughter." But now how still—the stillness of death is upon it.

And so it passed.

Sudden, there seemed to be a slight movement in the adjacent forest, and after a short interval four men appeared at the edge of the woods and crouched behind a hedge.

"Don't see a mortal soul about the place," whispered one, "and I should think from the stillness, that nobody was up yet." Then, after a pause: "I'll give just one call, my friend. See what we will find, and the speaker gave a quick sharp whistle, which the opposite hills sent back in echo. There was no other answer.

"Something's wrong, Grit," said another of the four, "can't rest assured of that." "I fear so, too," rejoined the Union scout; for it was Grit himself and his companions.

Then, after another ineffectual call: "We must manage to get around to the back of the negro quarters by skirting the forest."

"But can we do that?" asked Charley Clayton.

"I'll try," was the brief answer, and they set out at a rapid pace.

Soon they had accomplished their purpose, and were close upon the spot where the quarters had been.

"We must have given utterance to an exclamation of consternation and rage."

"Whose work is this?" he cried. "I must know, and that right speedily."

"That's Heaven's!" he exclaimed, the next moment, "look at the house—its windows are broken, and all the doors stand open. Come, there's little fear of our meeting any one; let us follow up this mystery to the end of the chase, and with strange feelings tugging at their hearts they hurried toward the mansion.

They entered by the back door. They

soon found the snuggery, and came upon evidences of strife.

The guerrillas had been careful to remove their own dead and wounded, but still it was easy to see that there had been hard fighting in that very room, as the blood upon the floor and the shattered ornaments and perforated walls betokened.

Then Tom Merritt came upon the dead body of a negro servant in the hallway, and a moment later Charley Clayton gave a cry of horror and consternation from the front door.

All hastened thither.

"My God, this is awful!" exclaimed Sid Newton.

"Look at that—that's fendish!" said Grit, with quivering lips, "and I don't find out something more about it soon I shall go mad."

At that moment Sid, who had approached the heap of murdered blacks, gave utterance to an exclamation of surprise, and dropped upon his knees before the repulsive pile.

Grit hastened forward.

"What is it, Sid?" he asked.

"I ain't quite certain, Grit; but I think this old man has some life in him yet," was the reply.

"God grant you may be right!" and Grit fell upon his knees at his side.

Soon the other bodies were lifted away, and the one that had attracted Sid's attention was raised up.

"Scip!" cried Grit, "Great Heavens! I am sorry for this. But, see, there really is some life in him. We may be able to save him yet."

"At least," said Tom, "we can bring him around long enough to tell us whose bloodily work this is, so that we may have the satisfaction of avenging him and all the dead here."

"Yes—yes; we'll avenge him. Ay, and what vengeance will we wreak upon the cowardly murderers?" and, while he was speaking, Grit had taken a flask from his pocket, which he now held to the old negro's lips.

After awhile the poor creature revived, and uttered a feeble groan.

Then he opened his eyes, and they rested upon Grit, who was bending over him.

"Mas'r Carroll!" he exclaimed, while a look of pleasure lit up his dusky face.

"Yes, 'em, Scip, come to save you," said the scout, tenderly. "Where are you hurt, my poor fellow?"

"No use—no use; too late, Mas'r Carroll," sighed the old man. "Grin Deeb done gone, de old man, shuah. But I mightly glad you 'se come afore de good Lord tuk me, cos yer be able to help de young missus an' her mudder."

"Yes, yes; tell us all about it, Scip—that is, if you have strength to do so. Who robbed the house and killed or carried off all the inmates?"

"De good Lord will give me strength to tell you, Mas'r Carroll. It was Cap'n Blyer an' his band o' thieves; an' dar was a 'Confederate sojer wid 'em dat seemed like he war a kind o' boss."

"Who was he—who was he?" asked Grit, eagerly.

"Reckon I used ter see him down in your country, Mas'r Carroll; but den dar wasn't de mark o' 'Ca'in upon his brow, an' his upper lip was white."

"Ah—h—h! Loren Langford!" hissed the scout, between his tightly clutched teeth.

"Dat's him—dat's him, sah, shuah!" said the negro, excitedly. "Dat's what I hear'n 'young Mas'r Dunbar call him, I member now."

"Was Fenton Dunbar here?"

"Yes, sah; an' de colonel, too, 'specks dey's killed him; leas'twee de war bleedin' powerful wid 'em, den he 'sented him last."

"And—Miss Hilda—the girls?"

"Speels dey's carried 'em all off, Mas'r Carroll."

"Sid—Tom—Charley!" cried the scout, excitedly, "we must do something for this poor fellow. He must tell his story to Stonewall Jackson, and when he's heard it, if he don't root out that murdering band of outlaws, I'll shoot him dead!"

"No use, Mas'r Carroll, no use," murmured the old negro. "De good Lord am callin' fur me; eben now I hear his glorious voice. Yes, Lor, 'S come!" and Scip flung himself upon his arms poor Scip flung back dead.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BATTLE OF CEDAR MOUNTAIN.

It was now the first week in August, and the military authorities at Washington hav-

ing obtained authentic information, which convinced them that the Confederate generals were assembling a formidable force for the purpose of crushing the army commanded by General Pope, and advancing to the north either of Washington or Baltimore, authorized him to summon the forces under General Cox, in Western Virginia, to join him with all possible dispatch, and directed him to occupy Culpepper at once, and then to move on to Gordonsville.

This movement instantly excited the apprehensions of the rebel leaders. Jackson and Ewell immediately called in all the forces they had prepared to cross the Rapidan at Barnett's Ford.

Among others whom this sudden and unexpected movement perpetually reminded of their duty was Loren Langford. Captain Blyer received the news with surprise, of his own, and the services of his band, for a few days would be highly acceptable, and a further intimation reached him that he had better hasten this urgent business. The cave then, and the several prisoners therein confined, were left in charge of a dozen or more men, while the guerrilla chief, at the head of some forty odd thieves and cutthroats, rode off to join Jackson's column.

Thus, for a few days, Ellen, her cousin, and their friend, were relieved of the presence of their tormentors.

All their arrangements being perfected, Jackson and Ewell crossed the Rapidan, approached the position occupied by the corps of General Banks, near Cedar Mountain, and on Saturday, the ninth day of August, a battle was fought between the two armies, scarcely second in fury and stubbornness to any which had occurred during the war.

At this point, as when the battle first took place was about five miles south of Culpepper Court House, on the road to Gordonsville.

The enemy took their position on the side of Cedar Mountain, where they were protected in a large degree by thick forests. They numbered at least twenty-five thousand men.

The advantages of their position were very great, for it commanded a full view of the operations of the Federal troops below them, and enabled them to post their batteries in several successive positions, semicircular in their outline, by which they could simultaneously cannonade the whole body of their assailants.

The position of the latter was completely exposed to the enemy, having no advantage of natural or artificial defense whatever.

On the day previous to the battle, the brigade of General Crawford had been thrown forward to the front, the movement of the enemy, and oppose his advance. General Banks occupied this position with his entire corps on the day of the engagement.

Rickett's division of McDowell's corps was then in line in front of the Federal army.

The corps of Sigel, which had been marching during all the night preceding the battle, was allowed to halt in Culpepper to recruit for a few hours.

Thus the engagement commenced between the enemy and the corps of Banks, which comprised about seven thousand men.

The combat opened with an artillery duel, and a quarter-past two o'clock in the afternoon.

It was at once evident that the rebels possessed an immense superiority in the number of their guns.

The firing of the Federals, of course, was also up hill, resulting from the disadvantage of their position; but the greater accuracy of their aim was equally apparent.

After an hour, one of the rebel's six batteries was silenced.

The Federals then closed up their lines on the right and left, and advanced toward the enemy.

The left wing having approached two hundred yards nearer than their first position, lay flat on the ground, while the contest between the artillery continued, so that the deluged shot discharged by the Confederates over them harmlessly, though they could not escape the effects of their bursting shells.

At four o'clock, another of their batteries was silenced.

At that moment, they advanced from their position, and made a bold attempt to flank the left of the Federals. This movement was repelled and defeated by the gallant advance of Geary's brigade.

At half-past four, the troops under General Prince, Green, and Geary, were ordered to charge the batteries which were on the left. As the Federals approached they

were assailed with a terrific storm of shot and shell, which might well have appalled even veteran warriors.

As they approached the base of the mountain, the rebels, whom the woods till then had concealed, rushed forward in immense numbers, and attacked the Federals with musketry. The latter were mowed down like grain before the reaper; but still they advanced without flinching.

In a desperate collision, they forced the enemy back upon the mountain, and held them there firmly.

But soon heavy reinforcements of infantry, numbering about eight thousand, enveloped the rebels to overpower the heroes before them, and compelled them eventually to retire.

This movement they accomplished quietly and in good order.

It was now half-past six, and the engagement became general. It was marked by special fury on the Federal right wing.

Dugraves nearly the entire of that sanguinary slaughter was inflicted here by both sides.

At one time the enemy were successful in surrounding the right flank by the use of an artifice scarcely excusable by the laws of honorable warfare.

Hoisting the stars and stripes, a large body suddenly emerged from the woods in such a position as to assume the appearance of a reinforcement to the Federalists.

The latter were completely deceived.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Major Burnham, "who that his whole command were acting in conformity—as he saw the glorious flag; 'there comes welcome aid at last!'"

"Don't you be too sure of that, major," said Grit Carroll, who was by his side, "these fellows are so desirous to play any trick; and if I'm not greatly mistaken, it's the enemy; and Blyer's guerrillas are among them."

But Burnham and the other Federal officers felt sure that the advancing column was composed of friends coming to reinforce them, so returned a deaf ear to the shrewd scout.

"Come!" exclaimed Grit, hurriedly catching hold of Sid Newton and Tom Merrett, when he saw there was no use saying any more to the officers. "Where's Charley?"

"He's gone to get a message to General Banks," said Tom.

"Then we can't wait for him. I tell you, boys, we must get in a few shots yonder. Do you see that stone wall?"

"Well," answered his companions, "we'll plant ourselves behind that. It's a good thing we've dismounted just now. Come, I say!"

"And the three hurried to the shelter of the friendly wall."

The enemy approached nearer and nearer, and soon it was seen that they were preparing to pour in a volley on the Federal lines.

Now was the time for the scout and his companions to get to their work.

"Wait!" exclaimed Grit, suddenly. "There's Loren Langford. Give me a shot at him. You, Tom, take Blyer, on his left; and Sid, you answer for the guerrilla lieutenant."

"All right!" they exclaimed in a breath.

"Are you ready?" asked Grit of his crouching comrades, as he thrust his own carbine through a hole in the wall.

"I'm ready," was the answer.

"Then here goes!"—and instantly a report rang out, and Loren Langford was seen to fall.

With a low but exultant shout, Sid and Tom leveled their weapons and fired.

The guerrilla chief's left hand dropped the bridle and fell useless by his side, while his lieutenant tumbled from his horse like a sack of meal.

Again and again the three brave men put in their work; and with them every shot told; none were really wasted. If they did not kill outright, they wounded, and that was nearly as well.

By this time the enemy had approached so near the Federal lines that they were able to inflict upon them a destructive volley of musketry.

Convinced by this argument of the great mistake they had made, the Union troops instantly returned the salute, and charged upon the foe with such ferocity as to break their ranks and compel them to retreat in the utmost disorder behind their first position.

As night approached the contest became more and more furious.

General Banks still held the position which he occupied in the morning.

At seven o'clock General Pope arrived upon the scene, and sent an order to General McDowell to advance General Rickett's di-

vision to support the troops engaged; and he also directed General Sigel to join in the engagement as soon as possible.

Rickett's division being close at hand, was quickly upon the field, and took up their position on the right.

The battle was then renewed with greater desperation and destructiveness than before.

It did not long continue, in consequence of the spread of the partial darkness of night over the scene.

The discharge of artillery alone was kept up, and cast its lurid horrors around the combat until near midnight.

At day-break the charges of infantry and cavalry terminated, the rebels drove back the Federal troops for a considerable distance, and occupied their position. But during the night the charges of infantry upon the mountain to their fastnesses, and on the following day occupied a line of defense still nearer to its summit.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DEATH OF LOREN LANGFORD.

Meanwhile, when the rebel troops that had come up under false colors had been driven back, Grit Carroll sprung eagerly toward the spot where he had seen his arch-enemy glow in the sun.

After a few minutes' search, he found him, and one glance told him he was not dead.

Lifting him in his strong arms as he would an infant, he bore him farward, and quickly gained the other side of the wall, where he threw him upon the ground.

The pain caused by this somewhat rough treatment, the guerrilla, however, yielded to his senses, and as he opened his eyes he saw Grit Carroll bending over him.

Instantly a look of terror came into his face.

"Ah! you know me then, do you—you miserable, cowardly villain?" hissed the scout.

"Yes, yes—you are Clinton Carroll, of Caroline county," muttered Langford.

"I am," said Grit, sternly; "and you are the murderer of my brother."

"I never murdered him," muttered the other. "He was hung by Stuart's orders, as a deserter."

"Yes; but through your instrumentality. I know the whole story. One who heard and saw all is even now close by your side."

The words of the man quickly turned, and saw Sid Newton.

"Ah! I remember him," he said, after a close scrutiny.

You made a bargain with the guerrilla chief Blyer to attack the house of the Widow Mason, and carry off all the inmates. Where are they now?"

Langford set his teeth hard and did not answer.

Grit, with a fearful light in his eye, drew a revolver, and after cocking it, placed the muzzle close to the villain's head.

"Where are they?" he demanded, in a terrible voice.

"I won't tell, Ha, ha! I can talk you, even in death," exclaimed Langford.

"Once more, and for the last time, where are they?" demanded the scout.

Langford's right hand quickly slipped to his side; as quickly it laid hold of the handle of his knife; the next instant, with the yell of a fiend, he started from the ground and fell upon his back.

His knife passed through the sleeve of Grit's coat, slightly wounding the arm he involuntarily raised to protect himself; then, a pistol-shot rang out, and the miserable villain fell back dead, with a bullet in his brain.

"Only one more of the murderers left to kill," was Grit's triumphant exclamation.

"Carroll, Newton, Merrett—the major wants you three, and Charley Clayton, for a special service, to be undertaken immediately. He thinks no one else can do it. You three, as well as I, are to go through the yonder; and the orderly who brought this message, rode quickly away."

"Come!" said the scout; "we must be off; Uncle Sam is waiting for us. He looked after first; we'll finish up mine afterward. Why don't you come along, Tom?"

"It's just occurred to me," responded Tom, in a matter-of-fact tone, "that it might be just as well to go through this dead scoundrel's clothes, they may contain something of interest to you."

"Ah! do so; and bring away whatever you may happen to find. I'll finish Sid, he'll hurry to the major at once. Since he

mounted the gold leaves, he likes to be kept waiting less than ever."

"Go ahead, then, and I'll be with you in almost less than no time," and, kneeling by the dead man's side, Tom quickly began his search.

He found several things of value and importance—among them a letter.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, when he had read the first writ like to see this sure. I must hunt him up at once."

He found him.

Grit read the letter, and put it carefully away in his pocket. Fifteen minutes later, his friend appeared on the road to Culpeper, on important service for Uncle Sam.

On the following day, neither the Federals nor Confederates seemed disposed to renew the engagement.

On the opposite banks which had already taken place, the overpowering heat of the weather, the immense number of dead and wounded of both armies, whose bodies covered the plain below and the mountain slopes, who had been cut for, removed, or buried, rendered it indispensable that the fighting should be suspended.

It was not until Monday evening that the practice of burying was completed, or the dead terminated.

During Sunday all the available Union forces were hurried forward to join the corps of General Banks.

It was then confidently expected that the battle would be renewed, and an attempt made to dislodge the enemy from their position on the mountain. But, during Monday night they voluntarily withdrew from their stronghold and crossed the Rapidan.

General Buford was sent forward with four regiments of cavalry in pursuit, to watch their movements, and ascertain their route.

Many of the rebel dead were left unburied; many of their wounded were abandoned by their departing comrades to their fate.

The Federals lost in this battle, in killed, wounded, and missing, about two thousand. The loss of the rebels was at least three thousand in killed and wounded alone.

The loss of the Federals was of unusual fierceness and determination on both sides.

The ground was covered for several miles with the killed and maimed, whose great numbers and horrible mutilations attested the fierceness of the contest.

The ground, in innumerable places, was plowed in deep and rugged gullies by the cannon-balls or exploding shells of the enemy.

It was, therefore, an honor to the Federal troops engaged, under such great disadvantages of number and position, that by their heroism and fortitude, if they had not won a complete and perfect victory, they had at least fought at Cedar Mountain a drawn battle.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FATE OF THE PRISONERS IS SETTLED.

The time passed wearily to the prisoners in the hands of the guerrillas.

The women were in an apartment by themselves, while the soldiers of Union and Fenton Dunbar were each confined separately. Fenton had managed, by bringing one of the rascals, to let the colonel know that the place of his confinement was near the room occupied by the ladies, and, as he was, he should any violence be offered them, he could penetrate to their apartment, and so help to defend them.

As the more inclined to believe he could do them good service, he informed him, as he had had the good fortune to pick up a keen-edged knife, that had been accidentally dropped by one of the guerrillas, and which he now kept constantly about his person.

This information conveyed a scrap of comfort to the fond father's soul; and for a brief period he was somewhat more at ease.

The battle of Cedar Mountain was fought, the rebels retreated, and the guerrillas were permitted to return to their fastnesses.

On the night of their return, the chief, whose left hand was supported by a sling, being unable to converse with his new lieutenant, and a sensual-looking Confederate officer from Richmond, who had accompanied them to the cave.

They had seated themselves about a small table in the back part of the main apartment, and almost directly before the place where the colonel was confined, hence, he could not but hear every word they uttered. Yes, he heard it all, and what he heard at

first almost made his blood run cold, and then fairly drove him wild with rage and horror.

"At length the trio of villains rose to go out into the open air.

"I'll settle, then," said the Confederate officer, in a highly satisfied tone. "We understand each other perfectly?"

"Yes," answered Blyer, "if there's no mistake about the gals—mine, you understand, is Miss Hilda."

"That's all right," said the officer, "I don't care a copper which is yours, so long as mine is pretty Miss Wayne, the colonel's daughter."

"And I suppose, Rugdon, you are satisfied?" inquired the guerrilla chief.

"Yes, indeed," laughed the new lieutenant; "the blue-eyed Yankee girl's good enough for me."

"Then an hour hence," said Blyer, in a tone of decision, "the colonel and the young lieutenant die; and after that the triple marriage ceremony takes place! Ha, ha! Can't you see that part of the thing for you that Loren Langford bopped the twig at Cedar Mountain the other day?"

"Yes, indeed," assented the Confederate officer, "and now let's get into the open air, this place is stifling."

"All right, come ahead," and the chief leading the way, they went out.

A moment later the guerrilla, who had passed notes between the colonel and Fenton Dunbar that part of the night.

"My friend," said Colonel Wayne, in as steady a voice as he could command, "let me have a light, and come to me again in five minutes. I will pay you well for the service."

"All right," said the fellow, and some ten minutes later he handed Fenton Dunbar a folded note.

The new lieutenant opened it, and by the light of the messenger's torch read as follows:

"DEAR FENTON—I have just heard the details of the most horrible plot ever concocted by human beings. That villain Blyer, and those his bosom friends, are the parties to the foul affair. You and I are to be murdered when you have been lulled to sleep by this is the least of the villainy that is to be perpetrated, you will understand the rest—I cannot repeat it more."

"Oh, Fenton, watch over my Ellen—indeed, do what I can to save her! Remember these words, I charge you, my lovely girl must not survive."

"You are near her. You have a keen-edged knife. To your hand, then, I intrust this last and dreadful act. I will not survive. I would have you to remember, I do so for death, if needful, the more difficult task I have to perform. I charge you, my lovely girl, to remember I charge you, my lovely girl must not survive. You are near her. You have a keen-edged knife. To your hand, then, I intrust this last and dreadful act. I will not survive. I would have you to remember, I do so for death, if needful, the more difficult task I have to perform. I charge you, my lovely girl, to remember I charge you, my lovely girl must not survive."

"PHILIP WAYNE."

The first effects of this letter on Fenton Dunbar were, for a few moments, he was like a madman, and the friendly guerrilla started back in affright, at the same time laying his hand upon his revolver to defend himself, if necessary.

"Look a-here, lieutenant," he presently said, "I ain't no kind o' scholar, an' I hain't got no kind o' an idee what's in that thar paper ther curmal sent ye; but I reckon thar ain't no manner o' use in your rearin' an' rearin' round yer lie, an' yer talkin' that air ridiculous sort o' way. Now, is there?"

These few timely words of the guerrilla somewhat quieted Fenton, and quickly understanding the necessity of keeping cool, he said:

"You're right, I was too hasty. The fact is, I was a little provoked at something the colonel said. I was wrong, but I was no part in the fight at Glenwood the other day, says if I had done as well as he, we wouldn't be here now. But there, he's an older man than I, and I'll think no more about it."

"You're wrong," said the guerrilla, "but you're right in not payin' any more 'tention to him, 'cos the ole feller don't take his confinement nothin' but a fool's money."

After the messenger had withdrawn, Fenton set himself to thinking.

Yes, he at last concluded, there was no help for it; the colonel and he must die, rather than that he should be left in the power of these consummate villains, Ellen should die by his own hand.

He would then tell the others what was like, and, as he was, and as they all so disposed, they could take their own lives with the knife he would give them.

Three quarters of the hour passed. Fenton heard footsteps approaching.

If he was to gain the apartment occupied by the ladies, the moment must be lost.

He went to the passageway leading from his own door.

The man left to guard the place was reclining on a bed of leaves.

Whether he was asleep or not, Fenton couldn't tell.

Cautiously—noiselessly, he left the room and slipped into the one occupied by the ladies.

In the dim light he saw them crouching in a corner.

"Who's there?" demanded Miss Lydia, sharply, and yet not in a very loud tone.

"Who's there?" demanded Miss Lydia, sharply, and yet not in a very loud tone.

"I hope we're all good Christians," said Miss Lydia, "and, as our lives are in the hands of God, that we will resign, whatever our fate may be."

Fenton had now reached Ellen's side, and gently he put his arm round her waist.

"You have something dreadful to tell us," she said, in a faltering voice.

"Yes," he answered; "and the trouble is, there are but a few moments left in which to tell you."

"Are we all going to be killed?" asked Miss Lydia, pointedly.

"Worse than that—far worse!" faltered poor Dunbar.

"What can be worse?" asked the maiden lady.

"Perhaps the easiest and best plan would be for me to give you this letter, and for you to read it aloud," said the young man.

Miss Lydia then handed him a voice that did not tremble once, read it through to the end.

Then, for a few moments, there was a deathlike silence in the place.

It was broken by Ellen, who, in a voice of unnatural calmness, said:

"Fenton, you will surely obey my father's last request. I beg, if you truly love me, that you will do so."

An agonizing sob was her only answer.

"And, Lieutenant Dunbar," said Hilda Mason, as soon as she could catch his attention, "I beg—I entreat the same great favor for you."

As these words passed the lovely Hilda's lips, her mother uttered a moan of anguish, and fell fainting into Miss Lydia's arms.

"Lieutenant," said Miller Wardsworth, "I can die, but I cannot be dishonored. Therefore, I, too, must command your terrible yet friendly offices."

"I shall kill myself," said Miss Lydia Wayne, "as soon as I feel there is any necessity for my doing so; but I hope to kill at least one of the villains first."

At this moment a number of the guerrillas—Blyer among them—were heard in the main apartment on the ground.

"Yes," said the voice of the chief, "bring out the colonel, and some of you fetch young Dunbar along. We'll parade 'em together, and send 'em to Heaven in company. Then for the rest of the fun afterward."

"Oh! Fenton—Fenton! they're coming! Don't, in mercy's name, wait another minute!" murmured Ellen, hastily. "Let me die now, and by your hand."

"I will do it, and must be!" cried the young man, in very agony.

At that moment there was another loud call in the outer chamber.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE TABLE TURNED.

"Hark! keep quiet, both of you," commanded the voice of the chief. "Then, in more gracious voice: 'There's time enough to die when all hopes of a happy life are passed. They are not coming here yet.'"

"At this moment those who had gone for Fenton returned."

"Not there!" roared the chief. Where the deuce is he then? He can't have escaped. Search the cavern high and low."

Some time was now lost in the search. Fenton's patience gave out, and again he roared:

"Come here, you confounded fools, some of you; look in the place where the gals are confined, then to one he's there, and another waiting to be killed, and must be!"

He himself hurried forward, followed by his lieutenant, the Confederate officer, and one or two men.

"Fenton, to save some one," he cried, as he stood in the entrance to the chamber.

One was quickly brought.

"Ha—ha!" exclaimed the blood-stained villain, "there you are, eh? I thought so."

Well, I suppose you might as well die right where you are now, as at any other place and time," and he slowly raised a pistol to take aim.

"Now—now! dear Fenton, quick, or it will be too late," whispered Ellen, eagerly. "Must it be?" almost gasped the young man, as he raised the knife to strike.

"Yes—yes; quick!" cried the courageous girl.

"Ah! that's your game, is it?" exclaimed the guerrilla chief, hastily. "Take that, then; you miserable whelp."

Two things combined to disturb his aim. The first was the sound of a volley fired at the moment he was outside the cave, and the other was a keen knife-blade, which at the same instant was plunged to the very hilt in his back.

The pistol shot rung out, but the bullet flattened itself against the walls of the cavern, doing no other damage than to bring down a shower of stalactites to the floor, where the would-be murderer averted his eye.

"Who could have fired that volley? Who could have struck that timely blow with the knife?"

The latter question shall be answered first. Colonel Wayne, finding himself suddenly left without a guard, and rightly judging that Fenton and Ellen's lives were in imminent danger, at once rushed after the chief. As Blyer was about to fire, heedlessly and unperceived, snatched a knife from the villain's belt and buried it to the hilt in his back.

Conspiration seized upon the other outlaws as their leader fell to the ground. For a moment they stood as if stunned; then, with yells of rage, they turned to look for the hand that had struck the blow; but Wayne and already disappeared as quickly as he.

But now something of far greater moment commanded their attention. Another and still another volley was fired outside, and the great body of the guerrillas began to press hurriedly into the cavern, with the startling cry:

"The Yankees are upon us! The Yankees are upon us!"

The victorious cheers of the gallant Yankees were heard as they rushed toward the opening to the cave.

Crack—crack—crack!

Down drop as many men.

Crack—crack—crack!

Down go as many more.

Then a volley is fired into the very cavern's mouth, and at least a dozen bite the dust.

"We surrender! We surrender!" was now the universal shout, and the battle was over.

"A nobly—bravely done! Captain Fairchild, and it's God-send we have not won this victory too late to rescue those we came to save."

Thanks for the compliment, Grit," rejoined Charley Fairchild, now a captain—vice Burnham, promoted to a full majority. "And you see to placing a strong guard on all the outlets, so that not one of the villains may escape. For, I swear, by the living God, that if a single hair of Fenton Dunbar's head is injured, or if any harm has come to your lady friends, I'll hang every mother's son of them."

"That's the talk, captain. You suit me, you do," and the scout started out to place the guards.

"I say! bring torches!" cried a voice at the other end of the great chamber, at the moment, and presently the cavern was filled with a perfect flood of light.

Soon all the guerrillas were secured, when it was found that there were twenty-nine dead and wounded, and twenty-three prisoners.

At this moment a Confederate officer came forward, and, addressing Captain Fairchild, said:

"Am I right in supposing that you are the commander of this noble party, sir?"

"I have that honor, colonel," responded Charley.

"Am Colonel Philip Wayne, of the—th Virginia regiment."

"Ah! colonel, I have heard of you!" exclaimed the Federal officer, as he extended his hand; "you were better known to me as these consummate villains." "I believe?"

"Yes," rejoined the colonel, taking the proffered hand, "and now I surrender myself most cheerfully to you."

"I trust you will find the change an agreeable one; I shall simply take your parole, colonel."

"You are very kind; and now, may I ask you to step this way, where there are a

number of ladies, somewhat disturbed, no doubt, by the recent conflict?"

"Certainly."

"(Captain—captain!" called a whining voice from among a heap of the captives, "I, too, am a Confederate officer, and was prisoner in the hands of these villains—I trust you will treat me with the same courtesy you have shown Colonel Wayne."

"Ah!" exclaimed Wayne, in a stern and thrilling voice. "I had almost forgotten. Let me say one word to you, Captain Fairchild," and he whispered eagerly for a moment in the captain's ear.

"Colonel Wayne, the request is so unusual—in fact, the thing itself so—"

began Captain Fairchild, hesitatingly.

"And yet—" interrupted Wayne, and again he whispered.

"Yes," exclaimed the captain at last; "I can understand how you must feel about the matter, and if the dirty whelp don't object to your plan, I won't."

Colonel Wayne instantly rose over to where the Confederate officer lay.

"I know you, Captain Floyd," he said, "and I know the great influence you exert here. But I also know you for a consummate villain. I heard all that passed between you and Blyer and his lieutenant. Now, then, if you will fight me at once, and here, you have a chance for your life; if you will not fight, you die inside of fifteen minutes by the rope."

"This is hard, colonel," whined the cowardly villain.

"What is the fate you intended for me and my daughter?" exclaimed the colonel sternly. Then, as Floyd remained silent: "Come! be quick—decide!"

"I will fight!" cried the villain, stammering.

"But will you give me a sword," said Wayne, to one of the guards. Then, turning to Fairchild: "Captain, will you lend me yours for a moment?"

Captain Fairchild silently handed him his blade.

The colonel advanced toward his detested enemy.

Suddenly, Floyd, thinking he saw a chance to get in a death-blow, rushed boldly upon him with uplifted sword.

Wayne, however, was watching him with eagle eye; and, as he was about to strike, heaved his own sword down, and a cruel stroke across his neck, nearly severing his head from his body.

The scoundrel fell dead without a groan.

"Now," said the colonel, calmly, wiping his sword, and returning it to Fairchild, "let us go the ladies."

"Willingly!" and they hastened to the chamber where they had been confined.

At the door, Grit already there, deep in conversation with Hilda Mason, while Fenton was conversing with Ellen and her strong-minded aunt.

Millie Wardsworth was seated beside Mr. Mason, who had just returned to consciousness.

On hearing approaching footsteps, she looked up.

"Charley Fairchild!" she exclaimed, and instantly her face was suffused with blushes.

"Millie! Is it possible?" cried the astonished officer; "and have I really, without knowing it, been of service to you, of all women in the world?"

"Indeed you have, Charley"—then, to hide her confusion—"and you will do us another good turn, if you'll only take us away from this horrible place with the least possible delay."

"Arrah! he says, thin, will ye? Och! I lave go bith an me, wagers. Ye won't be ashy as us that day, whin ye fell into ther wather forlnast me, ye moind."

"What's that, Tim?" asked Fenton Dunbar, curiously.

"Why, sor, your honor, I've just kilted ther murderin' villain who wanted to kill an' us that day, whin ye fell into ther wather forlnast me, ye moind."

"What!—and is Blyer really dead, then?" asked Grit.

"Yes, sor."

"I thought I finished him myself," said Colonel Wayne.

"Ye did not, thin," affirmed Tim; "but, sor, the sartin' is, sor, after a bit, an' his friends nearly off—ther haythen, ther Turk!"

"Well, I'm glad you've made sure of him at last," said the colonel. "Now there's the scoundrelly lieutenant to deal with."

"I fixed him," said Grit, calmly. "Good! Then the rest can be easily disposed of; we'll have them to the tender mercies of Uncle Sam."

CHAPTER XXIX.

ELMER CARROLL IS FULLY AND FEARFULLY AVENGED.

"I don't care what becomes of the prisoners," exclaimed Millie Wardsworth, warmly; "but, Charley, do, do, I say, take us away from here as quickly as possible."

"I'm perfectly agreeable, I assure you," laughed the handsome Yankee captain; "but the question is, where shall I take you to?"

"Why, back to my house, to be sure," said Mrs. Mason.

"No! no! that will never do," interposed Grit, hastily, and then he whispered a few words to the captain.

"Mr. Carroll is right," said Colonel Wayne, gravely; "you cannot return to Glenwood at present, dear madam."

"And why not, please?"

"The fact is," said the colonel, slowly, "these miserable vandals haven't left the place in a habitable condition—for one thing."

"Then what can we do?" asked the poor lady, almost in despair.

"I propose that you all return with me," said Captain Fairchild, suddenly. "I happen to remember there is a fine large house within the Union lines, which I can easily manage to put at your disposal—in fact, I promise to do so. And then, you can have the society of Colonel Wayne and Lieutenant Dunbar for as long as they are willing to remain with you, and I pledge myself that they shall return to their commands the moment they have a disposition to do so."

"I must have a little consideration," said Colonel Wayne, after a little consideration; "and I am sure a few days' rest will do me no harm. The fact is, my friends, I received a rather uncomfortable wound at Glenwood the other day, and I find it is troubling me even now."

"And for my part, I shan't at all object to keeping your company," said Fenton Dunbar, heartily.

"And if we go, I can see you often, can I not, Clinton?" Hilda asked the scout in a whisper.

"You shall see as much of me as you wish," Grit eagerly answered.

"That will be a great deal, then," she murmured, with downcast eyes.

"Then you, at least, think none the less of me, for I am a Union girl, and a Union soldier."

"No, indeed!" Were you not aware, Clinton, that I, too, am Union at heart?"

"You, Hilda?—and yet how could I even doubt it?"

"I am sure you need never have done so. For my part, I cannot forget that my father was a senator of the whole United States, and not of a paltry section."

"Bless you for the words you have spoken, my dear girl," exclaimed Grit, heartily. "You have made me supremely happy."

"Fall in! Fall in!"

The command went forth in cheerful tones, and soon the party was ready for the road.

The return march to the Union lines was accomplished without incident or accident, and the house Captain Fairchild had promised them was duly turned over to Mrs. Mason and her party, and there they remained for some time.

At length, when a new movement of the armies seemed to change necessity, Mrs. Mason and her daughter, together with Aunt Lydia and Ellen, returned South, the colonel and Fenton Dunbar having rejoined their commands some time before.

But Millie Wardsworth decided not to go South again. She listened to Charley Fairchild's earnest pleadings, and they were quietly married, he obtaining a furlough for the purpose.

For a bridal tour they went North; and when the captain was obliged to rejoin his regiment, he left his wife with his mother in their pretty country home, telling them they must be company for each other, until the cruel war was over.

Time sped by.

Battle after battle was lost and won. Grit Carroll and his three brave comrades did noble service, seldom resting, and always found where duty called, no matter what the danger might be. But, as yet, although he had served in the proudest country home, General Hunt had never been touched by his bullets.

At length came the fearful series of bat-

tles fought in the vicinity of the Wilderness.

Burnham's regiment—he was a colonel now—was with Phil Sheridan, and Grant—the great commander—ordered "Little Phil" to give Stuart "fits," and drive him out of the conflict.

"All right, general," said Sheridan; and instantly he started after the great raider.

Two days later, that is to say, on the eleventh day of May, 1864, his cavalry had reached a place called Yellow Tavern, about six miles from Richmond, and here they encountered an immense body of rebel cavalry commanded by Stuart in person.

Sheridan instantly ordered a charge, and a terrible battle of once ensued.

Grit Carroll was in the van, and, as the hostile columns came together, he was brought almost face to face with Stuart.

Like lightning his carbine sprang to his shoulder.

Crack!

And General J. E. B. Stuart fell to rise no more!

The light was over, and a feeling all over to pain or sorrow took possession of him.

"That is my last shot," he said, and quietly fell to the rear.

The fight was over. Their great leader was gone, and the rebels had no heart to struggle longer.

Many horses, and most of their guns fell into the Federal's hands.

It was a great victory for Sheridan.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCLUSION.

When Sid Newton, together with Tom and Charley, came upon the scout that night, they were alarmed to find that he was seriously wounded.

"The boys," he said, "I'm badly hit, the ball struck me just as I fired my last shot But," he quickly added, "it doesn't much matter now, poor Elmer is wholly and fearfully avenged, at last. The war is almost over, and so I shall ask for my discharge."

A little later, he did so, and after some delay, it was granted.

Soon after, he and Hilda Mason were married. They settled in Washington at first, but he and his wife returned to Virginia, and now reside at Glenwood, where their children fill the house with sunshine.

Sid Newton, Tom Merrett, and Charley Clayton all remained in the army until the close of the war. They have since gained large tracts in the South, and are prospering, as they deserve.

Captain Fletcher Burnham, led on by ambition, became a brigadier-general, and I have heard him say, that had the war lasted six months longer, he would have worn two stars on each shoulder instead of one. He is now a member of congress from his native state.

Captain Ingold also prospered; but he was contented with a major's commission, and, I am glad to state, is in the army still.

Tin O'Connell, God bless him, became a corporal, and after the close of the war, man, he stumbled into a fortune. He is president of a big mining company to-day.

Now for our rebel friends.

Colonel Wayne, being seriously wounded in the fall of 1864, and thereafter remained quietly on his plantation, where he still resides, with Aunt Lydia for his housekeeper.

Colonel Dunbar, because of his injury; and, after the war was over, married Ellen, who now graces his beautiful Richmond home, he being a bank president in what was once the Confederate capital.

[THE END.]

RARE SPECIMENS.

Perhaps you have heard of the rare specimens of solidly humanity that appeared at a popular hotel in the Southwest.

In the large bar-room of the house, during the evening, a discussion arose touching certain events that transpired at the battle of Shiloh.

The dispute waxed warm. Many of those present had been in the war, some engaged on one side and some on the other, and, being military men—and officers at that, they were very emphatic.

At length a modest gentleman, who had been sitting in a far corner, quietly listening, arose and came forward.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I happened to be engaged in that battle—was in at the beginning, and came out at the end—and, if

you would like, I will tell you just how it was."

All were respectfully silent while he spoke, and they could not be otherwise than attentive, for the man's description of the battle was so precise, so circumstantial, so eloquent, and so startlingly vivid, that those who had been there seemed to be living the fiery scenes over again.

When he had concluded, all understood, and there was room for no more dispute. On the following morning, the soldier of Shiloh went to the office to settle his bill previous to departure, and asked the amount of his indebtedness.

Said the landlady:

"You were in the army?"

"Yes, sir."

"May I ask what office you held?"

"I held no commission, sir. I was but a private soldier."

"If it is possible? Well, sir, I shall claim the privilege of celebrating this rare event by making you a present of a receipted bill without further cost to you. Of the thousands of soldiers that have stopped at my house since the close of the war, you are the first private on record!"

Persuasiveness of the Musket.

General Steedman tells a good story which is applicable to the manner in which the aristocratic Sixtieth Rifles recently skipped out in front of Ramleh, and gave everything up to the Egyptians. While near Nashville the general had a negro regiment on the picket line, and a young, bright mulatto sergeant in command of a post got the drop on a rebel post and captured the whole outfit. The rebels were a crowd of high-stepping young Virginians, and some of them were badly wrought up by the idea of having to surrender to a "lot of niggers."

General Steedman took their commander a fine young fellow, into his tent, extended some little courtesies to him, and, in the course of his conversation, said:

"It was a little tough, lieutenant, but war has taken in by colored soldiers, but war has strange consequences."

"Well, general," said the other, as he set down his glass, "I've been in the army now nearly four years, and if I've learned anything, it has been a profound respect for the musket. With my musket shoved into my face I don't usually ask any questions as to whose got hold of the breech."—*Toledo Blade.*

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